University of Alberta

Style Matters:
Movements of masculine desire in Rock Climbing

By

Bruce Erickson

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts.

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

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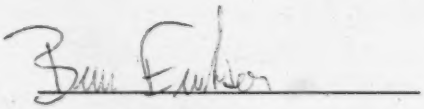

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On the face of it, it is debatable that the fashion in which we go about climbing rocks is of any consequence to anyone. (Jon Long, How to Rock Climb, 1993, p. 135)

The point to emphasize "is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous then we always have something to do. (Michel Foucault quoted in David Halperin, Saint Foucault, 1995, p. 114)

You have to have a real, not superficial, desire to do something. It's not enough just to say, 'I want to do this.' (Fréd Nicole, boulderer, quoted in Milton, 2001, p. 87)

That is what style is, or rather the absence of style – asyntactical, agrammatical: the moment when language is no longer defined by what it says, even less by what makes it a signifying thing, but by what causes it to move, to flow, to explode – desire. (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, 1972/1977, p. 133)

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *Style matters: Movements of masculine desire in rock climbing* by Bruce Erickson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts.

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Abstract

In Style Matters, I argue that rock climbing is a complex social activity situated within the discourses of masculinity and whiteness. The theory of Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1977) illustrates how we can read masculinity as a working of desire, and I isolate the use of style in rock climbing as a technique of this working. My framework can allow for a detailed reading of the interaction between masculinity, whiteness and heterosexuality, a reading that I show through the rock climbing discourses of risk and masochism. However, the textual reading of rock climbing also needs to take place at the local level of climbing activities. To this end, I provide a starting point to the consideration of our leisure habits as *both* constructions of *and* constructors of discourse through representations at the University of Alberta Campus Outdoor Centre climbing wall.

Acknowledgments

For I could never have done this alone, there are many people who I am indebted to. I would like to thank my supervisor Karen Fox for letting this project move in the direction that it did, and being able to help me make ties to leisure studies along the way. Gamal Abdel-Shehid, Cressida Heyes and Pearlanne Reichwein were wonderful members of the examining committee that provided stimulating and productive questions. I would like to thank Gamal and Cressida for comments on drafts and ideas for this thesis.

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Chapter 1 – The Building of A Wall: Situating the Climber's Body[1]

> "Do the Cliffhanger," yells a student in an introductory wall climbing lesson. He is referring to the one-handed overhanging move that was made famous by Sylvester Stallone in the 1993 blockbuster Cliffhanger. After 15 minutes of bouldering the students slowly gather, led by an instructor, to the overhanging part of the wall, where some of them suggest they need to be more like Tom Cruise (in Mission Impossible) in order to complete the route. (Fieldnotes, May 28, 2002)

I. Doing the Climber – Desire that Works

I want to indulge in a deliberate misrepresentation here, because it connects two important aspects of my project. The phrase 'do the cliffhanger' can be taken many different ways. The most obvious interpretation, as my field notes indicate, is as a command to imitate Sylvester Stallone. However, if we take the word 'do' and read it as a slang word for sexual intercourse, or more appropriately, fucking, we then have the command not to imitate Sylvester Stallone, but to fuck him. The misreading leads us to question the direct interpretation of people trying to imitate climbing style as a wish to be more like them, instead it suggests that identification with a certain climbing style is linked to a complex reading of the self. Thus while I originally wanted to ask questions about the ways in which we can understand masculinity on the climbing wall, statements such as 'do the cliffhanger' made it apparent that in order to understand masculinity I would have to understand how masculine desire works through climbing bodies on the wall.

This text is an exploration of the mechanics of masculine desire through the bodies of climbers. I engage with climbing representations at two different levels: first, as a reading of the popular culture surrounding climbing, and second, at the University of

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[1] A version of a portion of this chapter has been submitted for publication to the Journal of Experiential Education

Alberta Campus Outdoor Centre (COC) climbing wall. This twin line of investigation is necessary to understand climbing as both a field of cultural production, and as a leisure behaviour. The students in the climbing class observed above illustrate the interaction between these two levels of social relations. I believe that through this type of analysis we can understand masculinity as a constructed identity which is constantly being negotiated and reconstructed through performances of climbing. I point to climbing style as a significant technique in the construction of masculine (and other) identities in climbing communities.

The reading of desire that I will undertake relies heavily on the analysis proposed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1972/1977) in Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and schizophrenia. While starting from a position of psychoanalysis, they heavily critique the dominant trend in psychoanalysis to view desire as a privileged working mechanism of fantasy. Deleuze and Guattari refuse to separate the social reality from fantasy, or more accurately from desire. Desire is no longer defined as a lack of an object, but as production. By following Deleuze and Guattari and positioning desire as the determinate of social reality, we can start to ask political questions about how desire produces. Questions of repression and freedom become questions of how desire works in such situations. As Deleuze and Guattari state (1972/1977), "The question posed by desire is not 'what does it mean?' but rather '*how does it work?*'" (p. 109)

The question of desire allows us to ask the complicated questions about subjectivity because, under the Deleuzian framework, there is not an object that is lacking by desire, but the subject – a fixed subject. The fixed subject, as this Deleuzian framework shows, is something that can only exist through repression. Desire as

production needs to be interrupted to have the subjectivity fixed within a person. The task is then to understand the ways in which desire works in certain situations to provide that interruption – to understand the ways that desire can in fact desire that repression. The working of desire in this fashion, according to Deleuze and Guattari, operates through the coding of flows of desire. This coding gives direction and focus to something which is otherwise a flow of pure multiplicity. Thus the creation of a unified fixed subject relies on the ability to interrupt that multiplicity and provide it direction. In capitalism this flow is contradictorily allowed to flow in its multiplicity, while at the same time being coded towards the benefit of material production. This process that Deleuze and Guattari call deterritorialization and reterritorialization will be expanded upon in Chapter 2.

Territorializations of Leisure

Leisure has often been understood as a key factor to the development of identity (Kuentzel, 2000), however, as Walter Kuentzel notes, this is often understood as a process undertaken by individuals who are "motivated, goal directed actors, and if asked, can articulate their motives, needs roles, emotions, values, benefits, and preferences." (p. 88). Kuentzel argues correctly that these actors are not so transparent and their motivations and actions are not as easily understood as some might assume. Indeed that is the premise of my study: we do not fully understand the ways in which desire works, nor the way in which our identities are created through this process. My suggestion is that leisure habits like rock climbing work as interruptions to rigidly fix subjectivity. Our task, at the outset of this realization, is to start to map out the connections among leisure habits and the work (in the Deleuzean meaning) of identities.

In a way I am not alone in this exploration. There are a few recent studies of the place of desire in leisure (Fullagar, 2002; Wearing, 1998, Haun-Moss, 2002), and others are starting to examine, using a more theoretically adequate understanding of the self, the place of subjectivity in leisure (Wearing & Neil, 2002; Kuentzel, 2000; Keiwa, 2001; Shogan, 2002; Bell, 1997). However, by using the Deleuze and Guattarian framework of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, I am moving beyond the consideration of the experience of the self (where Keiwa [2002] and Wearing & Neil, [2002] focus), to a question of the interaction between constructions of the self and the construction of social production (the work, in Deleuzian terms). In what ways do leisure habits produce identities (as Bell [1997] has pointed out) and how are those identities implicated in social systems which support unequal power relations?

My choice of rock climbing as a place to explore the territorialization of leisure, may perhaps be considered a strange one, but the literature on climbing shows that climbing is understood as a technique of personal enhancement and self-development (Kiewa, 2002; Lewis, 2000; Heywood, 1994). As I will argue in Chapter 4, this process of self-development, this 'sense of self,' is a key aspect of the deterritorialization and subsequent reterritorialization of rock climbing (and other leisure pursuits).

From rock climbing, depending on the perspective, it is not that far of a jump towards an understanding of masculinity. It is often noted within both climbing magazines and academic articles, although never without contention, that climbing is a male dominated sport where masculinity shows through often enough (for example, Payne [1994], and Emanoil [2002]. However, my interest in climbing masculinities is not my opportunity "to set the record straight" (Emanoil, 2002, p. 40) on the place of

gender in climbing, as the editorial introduction a magazine devoted to women climbers stated (and while they did not intend on the pun, I use it to put full emphasis on the double meaning of the word straight). I, perhaps, am out to do the opposite, to 'queer' masculinity in leisure as we know it. To 'queer' masculinity, following Halperin's (1996) use of the term, would be to dislocate it from the normal meanings given to masculinity – or perhaps I should say, to reattach masculinity to some of the connections which have been hidden, such as its connections to race, class and sexuality. This process of dislocation and reattachment reads masculinity through the actions of women, through the homosocial creations of race and sexuality, and through the normalization of style by which I interpret climbers.

The rest of this chapter is an explanation of some of the social realities that produced the location in question; it acts as a genealogy of the University of Alberta Campus Outdoor Centre (COC) climbing wall. Acknowledging the various forces that affected the production of the material reality of the wall gives us a starting place to analyze masculine desire on the wall. The second chapter is an exploration of the theoretical foundations of this project. In addition to expanding on the politics of desire through Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1977), I outline in further detail the connections between masculinity, race gender and sexuality. In Chapter 2, I construct a framework that will allow me to outline those connections as they relate to the climbing communities and the COC climbing wall throughout the rest of the project.

Chapters 3 and 4 work within the Deleuzian framework of desire and are a demonstration of how masculinity and desire work in rock climbing. Starting from a discussion of how style structures climbing representations, I interpret masculine desire

through the privileging of certain styles within popular climbing media and on the COC wall. Chapter 3 focuses on the representations of styles in climbing magazine articles and advertisements. Within these texts we can see how the desire for subjectivity is held within popular styles of climbing. The subjectivity is based upon a traditional white male subject that relies heavily on discourses of modernity and risk. I try to disrupt the traditional readings of this masculinity as a rebellious masculinity and reread these styles through an analysis of masochism in climbing.

Chapter 4 serves as my conclusion and builds from the analysis in Chapters 2 and 3 into a reading of style on the COC climbing wall. I provide descriptions and analyses of styles that I observed on the wall within the past year. I highlight here the construction of whiteness through the normalization of style on the climbing wall. I discuss the importance of the gendering of style in relation to the absence of any notion of whiteness on the climbing. It is through these constructions that I read climbing bodies on the wall as an example of the territorialization of style, what Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1977) would call the coding of desire, to fit within a mode of production.

These comments form my conclusion because the length of this project does not allow for a study of sufficient detail to provide a complete analysis. However, my comments and observations lead to an understanding that the activities on the wall, the everyday recreational habits of everyday people, are part of the same construction of text and discourse that happens in print media. This conclusion is important for a study of discourse because it points to the entry points from which people can shape the discourse. Instead of giving discourse the final position of a structure which rules our lives, this analysis views discourse as a process of social relations, one which needs to be analyzed

to view the movements of resistance and control exercised through everyday situations (Smith, 1990).

II. The Building of a Wall

The brief description that follows about the University of Alberta Campus Outdoor Centre (COC) climbing wall illustrates some of the threads that enabled the production of the COC climbing wall, and specifically, this case study will point to the threads of climbing which were (and still are) empowered through discourse. Discourse is a system of meaning-making, a series of signs, words, movements, images and phrases that create an understanding about an event, object or experience (Hall, 1997). We can assume, from this perspective, that discourse structures how we interact with the world, and, in a very real sense, it is how we experience our lives.[2] Within the story I am about to tell, I want to illustrate that the experiences on the climbing wall are as much structured by what we can see (artificial holds, ropes, people and rules) as what we can't see. For example, publicity, regulations, multinational corporations, and the rise of extreme sports within North America all contribute to the way in which people experience the Campus Outdoor Centre Wall. Blockbuster movies such as *Cliffhanger* (1993) and *Mission Impossible 2* (2000) influence the type of climbing, as much as the instructors that work at the climbing wall. As the students who want to 'do the cliffhanger' illustrate, to engage in an afternoon of climbing or in a year-long training program, one must be a subject within these discourses.

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[2] This immediately brings up the fact that discourses then structure a certain life experience, while disempowering other experiences. Discourse is about power, about the ways in which authority and 'proper experiences' are constructed. The discourse that surrounds the building of the COC climbing wall is no different, it constructs certain correct experiences of climbing. This case study is an attempt to tease out the conditions that create correct climbing experiences.

At the Opening.

On November 6, 1989, the Edmonton Journal carried an article on the newly opened University of Alberta Campus Outdoor Centre Climbing wall (Staley, 1989). Throughout the article, the author contemplated both her first experience climbing and why others find the sport enjoyable. The comments ranged from the author describing her attempts to convince her feet to propel her up the wall as "the classic struggle of woman against herself," to her instructor's statement that he was in the sport for the "tremendous feeling of accomplishment,' in spite of the fact that he is often away from his family for months at a time in the Rocky Mountains. Another student was hooked on "the adrenalin rush of climbing higher and higher every time." The last reason given in the article was the love of mountains and the urge to climb higher to get a better view.

It was only a month later, however, on December 6, 1989, that the climbing wall was officially opened with a press conference to the media. It seems that the *Edmonton Journal* had pre-empted that date by exactly one month, for it carried no coverage of the press conference on December 7. The news that day was the Montreal massacre. The press conference was held as a joint venture between the funding agencies of the wall and the University, with several speakers and four demonstration climbers. The main sponsor of the climbing wall was the Edmonton Section of the Alpine Club of Canada. The desire was to open a wall, the highest of its kind in Western Canada, that was useful to the students, the Alpine Club members, and importantly the climbing and non-climbing public.

The proposal and construction of this artificial wall in Edmonton was one of the first in North America. The first 'climbing walls' were built in 15th-century France to

practice storming castles (Janiskee, 1995). Modern climbing walls can trace their history back to the first walls designed for rock climbing built in England in the 1960s (Janiskee, 1995). The popularity of these walls increased in the 1970s and 80s, and by the end of the 1980s there were over 250 artificial climbing walls in England. By this time in France the climbing community had created a media spotlight on artificial walls through competitions (Janiskee, 1995).

In North America, walls were slower to develop. The University of British Columbia and the University of Calgary were early leaders in the field, both constructing their walls prior to 1986. The first in what would become a long line of for-profit, full-service climbing gyms opened in Seattle in 1987 (Long, 1993). In the next five years, throughout North America over 100 more climbing walls would be built, including the wall at the COC.

Indoor climbing walls and other artificial climbing areas have developed out of a lack of easy climbing space (Loughman, 1981), which is obvious in Edmonton, a place that the Edmonton Section of the Alpine Club of Canada called a city without mountains (Alpine Club of Canada Edmonton Section, nd), and also out of a lack of climbing time, as might be found when climbers are driven indoors because of cold winters, again a common situation in Edmonton. In such situations, as a 1981 climbing instruction manual explains, climbers are often intrigued by their urban surroundings and start to climb local buildings and concrete structures (Loughman, 1981). I once lived in a house where the stairway to the third floor was graded at 5.9,[3] a grade of moderate difficulty, by

[3] Rock Climbs are graded according to difficulty using several different scales. The Yosemite decimal system grades climbs from 1 (flat) to 6 (unclimable). The 5th grade is where all technical rock climbs are situated. It is further divided into decimals up to .15. Thus a grade of 5.9 signifies a technical rock climb of moderate difficulty. See Long (1993) for further explanation.

the previous tenants, assuming that you did not use the stairs and climbed using the cracks in the old plaster walls. When climbing buildings, the manual added, it is not unheard of to glue rocks to the underside of bridges and concrete building walls. In an effort to find a more radical overhang, some climbers at the COC added some holds of their own to the stairwell behind the COC. While the holds have been chipped off of the completely overhanging positions, the marks from the glue still remain.

Another area of urban climbing in Edmonton, identified in the original proposal for funding for the climbing wall, was a lecture theatre on campus, fondly known as the 'Tory Turtle' for the shape of the building (Artificial Climbing Wall Committee, 1986). The climbing may have been decent on the Turtle, however, the proposal pointed out that this area had the obvious disadvantage of liability to the University. The wall, in this proposal, was seen as a place where the University could provide the student and general population with the benefits of rock climbing year round. For the University, the wall would benefit the students in outdoor education and recreation courses, the campus recreation programs, and intercollegiate team members through an opportunity to train strength, flexibility, endurance, balance and kinaesthetic awareness.

The final version of the wall was built at a cost of $78,000, a majority of the funds provided by the Alpine Club of Canada Edmonton Section. The Alpine Club also received grants for wall construction from the City of Edmonton Department of Community Recreation and Culture, as well as the Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation. The University of Alberta's Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation also donated money to the development of the wall. The wall was built according to an agreement that designated the COC as the managers of the wall, and the Alpine Club

would receive compensation for their initial capital donation (University of Alberta/Alpine Club of Canada, 1900). The agreement gave the Alpine Club members a three-hour block each week in which they could climb for free, and members would receive student prices outside of that time block. Also specified was that the University would not interfere with public climbing times at peak hours on a regular basis. The goal was to create a facility of public use with special benefits for the Alpine Club and the University.

The public stage of climbing.

The second article featured on climbing in the Edmonton Journal on November 6, 1989, detailed the possibility of the sport to be included in the Summer Olympics. In the article, the Alpine Club of Canada chair Chris Miler was enthusiastic about the possibility of the sport being included in the prestigious event. The article noted that the Canadian National Sport Climbing Championships were to be held at the University Wall that coming December. The Canadian National Sport Climbing Championships were held at the University wall twice in the past 13 years, once, as noted in 1989, and again in 1992.

The first climbing competition held in North America on an artificial wall was at Snowbird Ski Resort in Utah, sponsored by Snowbird billionaire owner turned mountaineer, Dick Bass (Knapp, 1997). The previous year, the American climber Ron Kauk won an outdoor competition in blue jeans, to set himself apart from European and new wave sport climbers in tights. He was quoted as saying "John Wayne never wore Lycra" (Knapp, 1997).[4]

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[4] Sport climbing differs from traditional lead climbing, because the protection used is more secure, providing an opportunity to fall with more confidence. The technology that is used in sport climbs, bolts drilled into the rock face, was frowned upon by the general American climbing population when it first came out. The increased safety made the climb too easy and not considered worthy. Kauk's (Knapp, 1997)

While the Olympics has only involved rock climbing as a recognized sport, never as a competitive event, the ESPN creation of the X games has perhaps filled the void for the time being. Drawing on a need for programming and a burgeoning new market that had not yet been tapped, the new cable sports network ran a summer X games in 1995 (Stein, 1998). The next year, building on the success of the first year, climbing was introduced among the events. In 1999 two climbers from the University of Alberta climbing wall were invited to compete in the Speed Climbing events. The boyfriend-girlfriend team of Zoe Kozub and Seth Mason placed 16th and 12th respectively in the competition (accessed online October 29, 2002, http://espn.go.com/xgames/summerx99 /schedule/).

The advantage of the X games, for climbers, is that the formula for inclusion of a sport is solely based on perception as extreme, a term with a very elusive definition, but perhaps most appropriately defined in a joke made by Nike. In 1999 Nike ran an ad for a trail running shoe which stated in big bold letters over two pages of smaller text, "Sport + Death = Extreme" (Nike, 2000). The inclusion of climbing in the category of extreme was a shoe-in for the first X games, but perhaps TV ratings are now taking over the humorous Nike definition, because the 2000 X games, which have continually been a hit with potential advertisers, have dropped the climbing component to only the speed event – one which has a more dramatic style (accessed online, October 29, 2002, http://www .hickoksports.com/history/xgames.shtml#sclimbing). At speed climbing events, as opposed to bouldering or difficulty routes, two climbers go head-to-head, and whomever gets up first wins.

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statement connects himself to both the masculinity and nationalism of John Wayne, and attempts to place sport climbing outside of both.

At the 1997 X games, in the less dramatic difficulty event, the local Zoe Kozub placed behind a rising star of the sport, and reigning X games champion, Katie Brown (Yohemas-Hayes, 1997). At that point in time, Brown was climbing as much as possible, alternating between climbing time and high school in Paris Kentucky. Katie, at age 15, was at the top of the professional climbing competitions, winning the X games prize money, which was the largest offered for a climbing comp, three years in a row, only to lose the next year when the format switched from high-wall difficulty climbing to a bouldering event (Stanley, M, 1999 - http://classic.mountainzone.com/climbing/99 /interviews/brown/). She was later named to the U.S. National Climbing team and has now slowed down her climbing career, putting more emphasis on her studies at the Colorado Christian College. In this way, Katie Brown has become somewhat of a rebel to what is often regarded as a tight community of dedicated climbers. Her early retirement from the sport is directly in the face of the rhetoric of climbers who espouse climbing as a way of dropping out of the routine concrete world. In videos, Katie was often seen climbing with family and playing the flute, her instrument of choice (Perlman, 1997). Brown, as a professional climber, had several professional sponsorships, one of which, Entre Prises, the largest manufacturer of climbing walls in the world, has a closer connection to the COC wall than others.

The industry of climbing.

Starting out in France, Entre Prises has branches in five different countries, including the United States. Their walls have been made not only for every X games, but also as a demonstration to the Lillehammer Olympics and for some very high profile Outdoor Corporations, such as Recreation Equipment Inc. (REI) in Seattle. They have

built over 2000 walls worldwide, and if you browse through their North American reference list (at www.ep-usa.com) you will not only find the REI wall listed, but also walls to several YMCA's across the United States and a couple of universities including the University of Calgary. Noticeably missing from the list is the COC wall, which Enter Prises installed in 1989. If that wall had not been impressive enough to make the reference list, they could also claim the later addition of the lead wall, which is touted as the highest lead wall in western Canada.

The first wall was built through a combined effort of two Entre Prises supervisors and a volunteer team provided by the Alpine Club of Canada Edmonton Section. The construction started in September 1989. As we learn from the brochure from the grand opening press conference, the wall was constructed from both reinforced plywood panels and composite fibreglass panels (University of Alberta, 1989). The construction of these panels was designed to act and feel like real rock, so that shoes and hands can mimic the movements needed at an outdoor cliff. Entre Prises has now taken this technology and collaborated with a company that has been designing decorative rock sculptures for years and created a type of climbing wall that is meant to look and feel like natural rock to give climbing walls that real feel.

While Entre Prises might be the largest manufacturer of climbing walls in the world, manufacturing climbing holds is a burgeoning industry. Because each panel (a mounted piece of composite fibreglass or plywood) on a wall contains up to 60 potential spaces for a hold, creating thousands of possible hold placements on any professional wall, most climbing walls try to acquire as many diverse types, textures and sizes of holds possible. Looking in a catalogue such as the Canadian company, Mountain

Equipment Co-op, you will find over five different brands that are offered (Mountain Equipment Co-op, 2002). One such brand, Tekniks, was developed at the COC wall by the X games pair, Zoe and Seth.

Tekniks, thanks to the support of companies like Mountain Equipment Co-op and the Canadian National Sport Climbing Championships, has been able to start selling their holds to many other climbing gyms. I recognized their patented star on climbing holds from my hometown gym in Winnipeg before I moved to Edmonton. Another gym that features Tekniks holds is the full service climbing gym in Edmonton, called Vertically Inclined. Since the debut of Vertically Inclined in 1997, the COC wall has had competition for the Edmonton climbing public. However, the large difference in fees for each gym, under $5 for the COC wall opposed to over $10 for Vertically Inclined, has allowed the COC to keep a certain set of customers. The leading role that the COC has taken in creating provincial and national standards for climbing gyms has also given the COC a different role to play in the local climbing community.

Early in the running of the COC wall, 10 indoor wall owner and operators in Alberta formed an organization with the intention of creating standards for the operation and instruction of the climbing walls in Alberta (Personal Communication, J. Hutchison, March 27, 2002). Prior to their inception in 1994, there was no standard for teaching on indoor climbing walls. The organisation named the Alberta Sport Climbing Association approached the Association of Canadian Mountain Guides to form guidelines appropriate to indoor instruction. The result was the Climbing Gym Instructors levels, a three-level certification process that focuses on indoor walls. Along with being involved in the creation of these standards, the COC has taken a lead role in promoting the use of these

certificates. Instructors at the COC are paid a significantly higher wage if they are certified through the Climbing Gym Instructor's program (Personal Communication, J. Hutchison, March 27, 2002).

Communities of climbing.

The purpose of this chapter is to situate the major discourses that structure our understanding of the COC climbing wall. The various aspects described illustrate the ways a climbing wall is more than just materials and a location. Materially, the wall is constructed of steel, plywood, a fibreglass composite, it is drilled and filled with T-nuts, bolts and climbing wall holds made out of substances that the construction companies will not reveal because of the tight competition. Built at an original cost of $78,000, there have been several additions at a total cost of over $100,000. The yearly budget of the COC hovers around $750,000.

The wall is also built upon the community of industry, a law company that is able to separate COC actions and opportunities from lawsuits, a climbing wall company that creates specialized holds, panels and is involved in international climbing competitions. That community also includes a competitive circuit in Canada, involving sponsors from local and national climbing companies, and obviously, prize winners.

Some might say that opposite to that community is the group of climbers who are involved in the sport for the climbing. Their involvement at the wall represents an escape from the routine of their student or corporate lives. And finally, the wall contains a whole set of standards and rules, set by the wall community and others set by the community outside. A test is what allows you to have access to all areas of the climbing

wall. When you take the test you pass behind the counter at the Campus Outdoor Centre and set up a practice belay stand right underneath the Enter Prises banner.

This history shows the diverse and contradictory claims to meaning that construct our understandings of the COC wall. These claims limit and empower certain possibilities with the wall. These possibilities are not only accessible to those climbers who spend their time living through various aspects of these competing claims. As the students described at the outset of this chapter show, it is enough to merely have seen a clip of a blockbuster movie or two. The public image of climbing, the outward representations of climbing are available through popular culture. These images are what I will be exploring, both on the climbing wall and in the arena of popular culture, to examine the plural ways in which desire works in and around a leisure habit. My misinterpretation of the cries of students to 'do the cliffhanger' represents only one of the many ways in which our understandings of what climbing means are structured through the interaction of material production and desire.

Chapter 2 – Reading Bodies, Reading Desire

I. The Discursive Field of Leisure

> Leisure studies, I contend, is not so much about the examination of integrally constituted physical space or 'natural' segmented time and 'free' experience. Rather it is about what freedom, choice, flexibility, and satisfaction mean in relation to…social formations. (Rojek, 1995, p. 1)

Chris Rojek's (1995) comments, from the introduction to his book Decentring Leisure, speak to an understanding of how leisure habits are formed within a larger discursive field. As the discussion in Chapter 1 indicates, what we know as the field of leisure is interconnected with many other communities and fields of meaning-making. If there is a commitment in leisure studies towards an understanding of the concepts of freedom, choice, and satisfaction, it is necessary to go beyond the individual and understand how concepts of representation and pleasure are translated into 'natural' facts. That is, how are concepts like 'a natural body' or 'a pleasurable movement' within the field of leisure part of a discourse of meaning-making that are taken as matter of fact and how do they reinforce systems of power relations with specific effects?

I want to suggest that a view of leisure as 'natural segmented time and free experience' is derived from an analysis lacking consideration of connections like those illustrated in Chapter 1. By ignoring these connections, we fail to see the complex use of leisure in the guise of innocent after-work activities to support the normalization of power relations. The absence of critical analysis that does not acknowledge the effects of normalization can create a uniform view of leisure – an overarching narrative that generalises whether leisure is a progressive or oppressive activity. These narratives

inscribe inherent value to a leisure pursuit and naturalize the bodies that participate in leisure activities. That is, the overarching narrative is derived from a somatic perspective and thus values that same somatic perspective. For my analysis of rock climbing, I suggest that one important somatic perspective is that of masculinity. My investigation of masculinity is tied to an investigation of desire because of the connection I see in the production of desire and the production of social reality and identity – desiring-production is at the centre of the category masculinity, the centre of an important regime of social power.

I. Social Production and the Construction of the Self

To understand how it is that I use the term desiring-production it is necessary to delve into the core concepts of Deleuze and Guattari's (1972/1977) theory. They direct their attention towards the ways our understandings of self are made to be consistent with modes of material production. For them, it is the process of production of desire that is important, specifically, how is desire produced in such a way to support a capitalist mode of production?

The term that Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1977) use to bring the spheres of desire and (material) production together is "desiring-production" (p. 1). They argue that desire and social reality are not separate; instead they are in fact the same: "We maintain that the social field is immediately invested by desire, that it is the historically determined product of desire" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972/1977, p. 29). It is not that desire invests in fantasy, which then moves into social reality, but that desiring-production is the production of social reality. The flows of desire – the ways in which we move, sleep, eat, shit – are directly invested into the field of social reality. As such, desiring-production is

important to our understanding of how it is that social reality has specific effects. There is nothing within desiring-production, say Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1977), that directs it in certain ways, or codes it towards certain values, for example, heterosexual marriages, or consumption of material goods; desiring-production in and of itself is uncoded and pure multiplicity – it has no origin or direction. Desiring-production needs to be coupled with systems of social organisation, capitalism for example, to be coded and territorialized towards certain outcomes. It is this process, the process of how desiring-production is made to work, that Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1977) see as the key to understanding how repression works through social systems.

Most important to their study is the social system of capitalism. Capitalism allows capital to flow in similar ways as desire flows; in fact, it tries to associate flows of desire with flows of capital. As Perez states, "capitalism works by inscribing, coding, and re-directing the flows of desire so that they may correspond with the flows of capital at the stock market" (Perez, 1990, p. 55). This process operates at two levels. The first is a process of deterritorialization which allows desire to flow in unpredictable ways from the manner that is historically determined according to prior codings. Deterritorialization is to let desire travel to foreign lands, to flow through barriers that have been erected to direct the movement of desire (Goodchild, 1996). This process of deterritorialization (decoding) requires the reverse process, however, to finally codify the flows to that of the market. The process of reterritorialization attaches flows of desire to the material production of capitalism at the point where they are threatening to fly off on their own line of flight, at the point where they threaten to take off outside of the capitalist system: "capitalism is the only social machine that is constructed on the basis of decoded

flows…Capitalism therefore liberates the flows of desire, but under the social conditions that define its limit and the possibility of its own dissolution" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1977, p. 139-40). Without the process of territorialization, the coding of desire within the conditions of its own dissolution, capitalism would not be possible, because it cannot allow for desire to flow uncoded.

The contradictory process of deterritorialization and territorialization involved in the capitalist social machine provides for possibility of a resistance to the repression involved in capitalism. As Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1977) suggest, the combination of economic relations of production with the flows of desire can explain how the flows of desire both create "within the economic forms their own repression, as well as the means for breaking this repression" (p.63). Desire contains both the repression of desire and the revolutionary potential of desire.

Desire and the soldier-male.

Using Deleuze and Guattari's framework, Klaus Theweleit (1977/1987) shows how the process of territorialization worked in the fascist soldier of Germany in the 1920's[5]. His study provides an example of how Deleuze and Guattari's theory can create an effective tool for understanding the ways in which masculinity works. I turn to Theweleit for my analysis of climbing for two reasons. First, his question is similar to one that underpins my project: how does masculinity code the flows of desiring-

[5] Theweleit's (1977/1987) use of fascist soldiers in Germany speak to the (mis)understanding that fascist soldiers are different than other soldiers. His main argument goes against the belief that fascism arises through a 'false' consciousness. He argues instead that fascism is part of desiring-production in our present social machine. The importance of the choice of fascist soldiers is in the belief that the soldiers were doing exactly what they intended to do, and that mode of reality production is still available to us in certain present circumstances. While the relation of the fascist soldier to today's climber is a distant one (although intertwined through common histories of military and science), I find the connection in the techniques of desiring-production, the ways in which, as I will show throughout this project, climbing desiring-production is achieved through similar forms of repression and normalization.

production? Second, the detail he provides about the ways in which those flows are coded through masculinity can give us some insight into how climbing masculinities are built upon the body of the climber, especially when talking about the traces of masochism in climbing.

Taking as his object of study the writings, both fictional and life history, of a group of 1920 German Freikorps soldiers, Theweleit (1977/1987) locates the fantasies of these men in the control of their desires and the transcendence of their body. The Freikorps soldiers were right-wing professional soldiers in Germany between the First World War and the rise of the Nazi government; many of these soldiers later played an important part in the Nazi government and military. Some of Theweleit's findings isolate how the fantasies of the soldier male were necessary for the maintenance of unequal power relations between males and females, a power dynamic that was a key aspect of fascism. This power differential was created through the ways the soldier males maintained rigid bodily armour to protect against the flows of desire. The armour Theweleit speaks of was both a physical and mental barrier between their inside and the others outside through which no fluid or flow of desire was allowed to pass.

The key to my use of Theweleit lies in his statement that:

> We need to understand and combat fascism not because many fell victim to it, not because it stands in the way of the triumph of socialism, not even because it might 'return again,' but primarily because, as a form of reality production that is constantly present and possible under determinate conditions, *it can, and does, become our production. The crudest examples of this are to be seen in...male-female relations, which are also relations of production.* (Theweleit, 1977/1987, p. 221)

Theweleit (1977/1987) relates the male-female relations of the fascist soldier to how capitalism controls desire. In capitalism, there is the increase in research and

development of the human potential, "setting in motion streams of money, commodities, and workers, and propelling itself forward on the streams of sweat and blood of workers and non-European peoples. Running parallel to that is a process of *limitation*, directed against the evolution of human pleasures" (Theweleit, 1977,1987, p. 264). Limitation occurs through increased specialization, alienation from the process of creativity, exploitation of human labour, and the coding of desire through material goods. Because of these processes of limitation, the human potential is not translated into new forms of human freedom. Desire is strictly controlled and made to run only in a directed manner. Using examples drawn from European literature, Theweleit shows how, historically, desire was conceived of as only flowing through women: "In some way or another, it always flows in relation to the image of woman" (Theweleit, 1977/1987, p. 272). The coding of desire through women happened in the literature as well as the writings of the soldier males. It was not only desire for heterosexual sex that flowed towards women, but also the transcendence of the world[6].

The encoding of desires through women allowed for the soldier males to build up an armour around their bodies, which made distinct the male and female. The male was the dam that stopped the female desire from flowing. Yet this process was impossible – "human beings live in, and on, flows. They die when streams dry up" (Theweleit, 1977/1987, p. 266). If the soldier male's goal was to stop streams from flowing – "'imaginary' streams and real streams, streams of sperm and desire" (Theweleit, 1977/1987, p. 266) – then that process was impossible without killing life itself. The importance of fascism to the soldier males came from the way the rituals allowed the males to negotiate their dam-building process without killing themselves. To understand

[6] Eve Sedgewick (1985) also relates how male desire (this time for power) flows through a woman.

how the soldier males perceived the rituals of the Nazis, it is worth quoting Theweleit at length:

> Men themselves were now split into a (female) interior and a (male) exterior – the body armour. And as we know the interior and exterior were mortal enemies. What we see being portrayed in the rituals are the armor's separation from, and superiority over the interior: the interior was allowed to flow, but only within the masculine boundaries of the mass formations. Before any of this could happen, the body had to be split apart thoroughly enough to create an interior and exterior that could be opposed to each other as enemies. Only then could the two parts re-form "in peace" in the ritual. What fascism promised men was the reintegration of the…hostile "female" element within themselves. (Theweleit, 1977/1987, p. 434)

The process of control, given to the soldier male by the fascist rituals, allowed him to kill his female interior. This was also materialised in the violence against women and the unclean, feminine Other of the Nazi – the Jewish male and the communist male.[7]

Because of the connections he makes between capitalism's encoding of desires and the control of the masculine body, Theweleit's (1977/1987) comments require us to rethink the ways in which we position the masculine body with a rigid, controlled body. The specific technics of control are important to the analysis of the position of such a body since bodily control is gendered based on the techniques and ends desired.[8] In Theweleit's reading, control over a male body, through the creation of boundaries, allows the male to transcend the desires of that body only by a symbolic and material destruction

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[7] While I want to highlight the ways in which the rituals allowed the soldier males to accomplish this negotiation, it is also important to note that these soldiers were killing-machines. Theweleit spends much of the first half of his book documenting the representations of violence against women that the soldier males believed in. He states, "Representations of murders committed against women frequently end on this peculiar note of satisfaction ('-and there was peace again in the land'). It pushes feelings of disorientation and horror that also surround the event in the background. The dominant emotion is a passionate rage that will not leave its object until the object lies dead on the ground" (Theweleit, 1977/1987, p. 191). These representations are not all fiction, they are the autobiographies of the soldier males as well. However, because masculine rock climbers are not involved in the murder of women, it is the explanation of the way in which the ritual of the fascist helps the soldier male to negotiate the dilemma that is helpful to my study.

[8] See for example Bordo (1993) for ways that control of the body (through eating) is distinctly feminine.

of the feminine 'other.' It is this reading of desire for control and transcendence of the body that I think will be useful in the analysis of movements in rock climbing, a sport where precision and control are key elements to climbing the hardest routes. Through the specific techniques of control over the body, power is utilized; for the soldier males of Theweleit's study, their power was directly related to the ways in which they controlled their body. Masculinity was employed to control the soldier's flows, and the soldier works to control the communist/Jewish/female/other. In a similar way, the increased skill of the climber (as defined through a rigid control over the body) is a way of mobilizing power through the climbing community.

The coding of desires through the masculine and the feminine in Nazi Germany, and arguably elsewhere throughout the 20th century, helps masculinity and femininity work through and for social production. Theweleit's (1977/1987) analysis shows how a Deleuzian framework can help to understand the ways in which the social production of masculinity and desire work together to form systems of power. Male Fantasies (Theweleit, 1977/1987) enables an exploration of the ways in which masculinity works in fascism, to aid both the soldier-male and the nation-state mobilize power. The question that I borrow from both Theweleit, and Deleuze and Guattari, one that anchors the best studies of masculinity that I have seen, is how masculinity works to produce specific social effects, meanings and power relations.[9] Not questions of origin, although these often will help isolate what works, nor questions of motive, but the question of how it works, what is produced through masculinity.

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[9] Adding to Theweleit's work, I would also include Taking it like a Man: White masculinity, masochism, and contemporary American culture (Savran, 1998),Race Men (Carby, 1998), Manliness and Civilization (Bedermen, 1998); "Gosh, Boy George, you must be awfully secure in your masculinity!" (Sedgwick,

II. Performing Masculinity

I want to start my articulation of the desiring-production of masculinity through a discussion of the performance of masculinity – the ways in which masculinity is constantly being constructed through everyday activities. This follows Judith Butler's (1990) point that "gender proves to be performative – that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed" (p. 25). Masculinity is always a performance of what it is claiming to be. I am interested in the ways that the performances of bodies (and through bodies on the climbing wall) are shaped by lines of gender, race and sexuality. As Homi Bhabha (1995) states, "to speak of masculinity in general, sui generis, must be avoided at all costs" (p. 57). The specific connections between masculinity, whiteness, and sexuality are vital to understanding the work of masculinity and desire in rock climbing. What follows is somewhat of a distance from rock climbing, however, I want to illustrate how race and homosocial interactions between men are part of the performance of masculinity that happens within climbing communities.

To consider the performative effects of masculinity perhaps the best place to start with those who are overtly acting masculinity – drag kings. In an insightful look at the ways in which masculinity is created on female bodies, Judith Halberstam (1998) argues that lesbian images of masculinity are not merely mimicking male masculinity, but are in themselves creating representations that help to create popular understandings of

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1995), and White Guys: Studies in postmodern domination and difference (Pfeil, 1995) in the list of studies that ask how masculinity works.

masculinity. In making this argument, Halberstam uses the contemporary drag king culture to illustrate the relation masculinity has to performance. For Halberstam,

> current representations of masculinity in white men unfailingly depend on a relatively stable notion of realness and the naturalness of both the male body and its signifying effects. Advertisements…appeal constantly to the no-nonsense aspect of masculinity, to the idea that masculinity 'just is', whereas femininity reeks of the artificial. (p. 234)

Advertisements like the one by Gore-Tex in Figure 1 seem to suggest that the men are not performing masculinity, but that they 'just are,' their masculinity is a part of themselves not a constructed identity. The man running up to the viewer is exemplary in his portrayal of the 'real' and 'naturalness' of masculinity on male bodies. Neither clean shaven nor unshaven, neither muscular nor weak, the man has all the attributes of an 'average' (and I intend that word to be loaded) man in nature. Drag king shows (and Halberstam's [1998] analysis) make masculinity visible as a theatrical performance, one that does not necessarily need to be read on male bodies. Importantly, Halberstam notes that the masculinities most available to the drag king are those that are already visible – non-white, working class, or gay masculinities are easy to portray, because it is white masculinity that lays claim to the naturalized, non-performative masculinity, masculinity that exists in the correct masculine body. The 'just is' masculinity is a masculinity that becomes hard to parody because of the connotations of naturalness that are associated with it.

Halberstam's (1998) argument, while illuminating the performance of masculinity, implies that while reading masculinity it is vital to talk about the space in which that masculinity exists. To talk about masculinity (in Canada) is necessarily to talk middle-class heterosexual masculinity – to talk about performances of masculinity is to

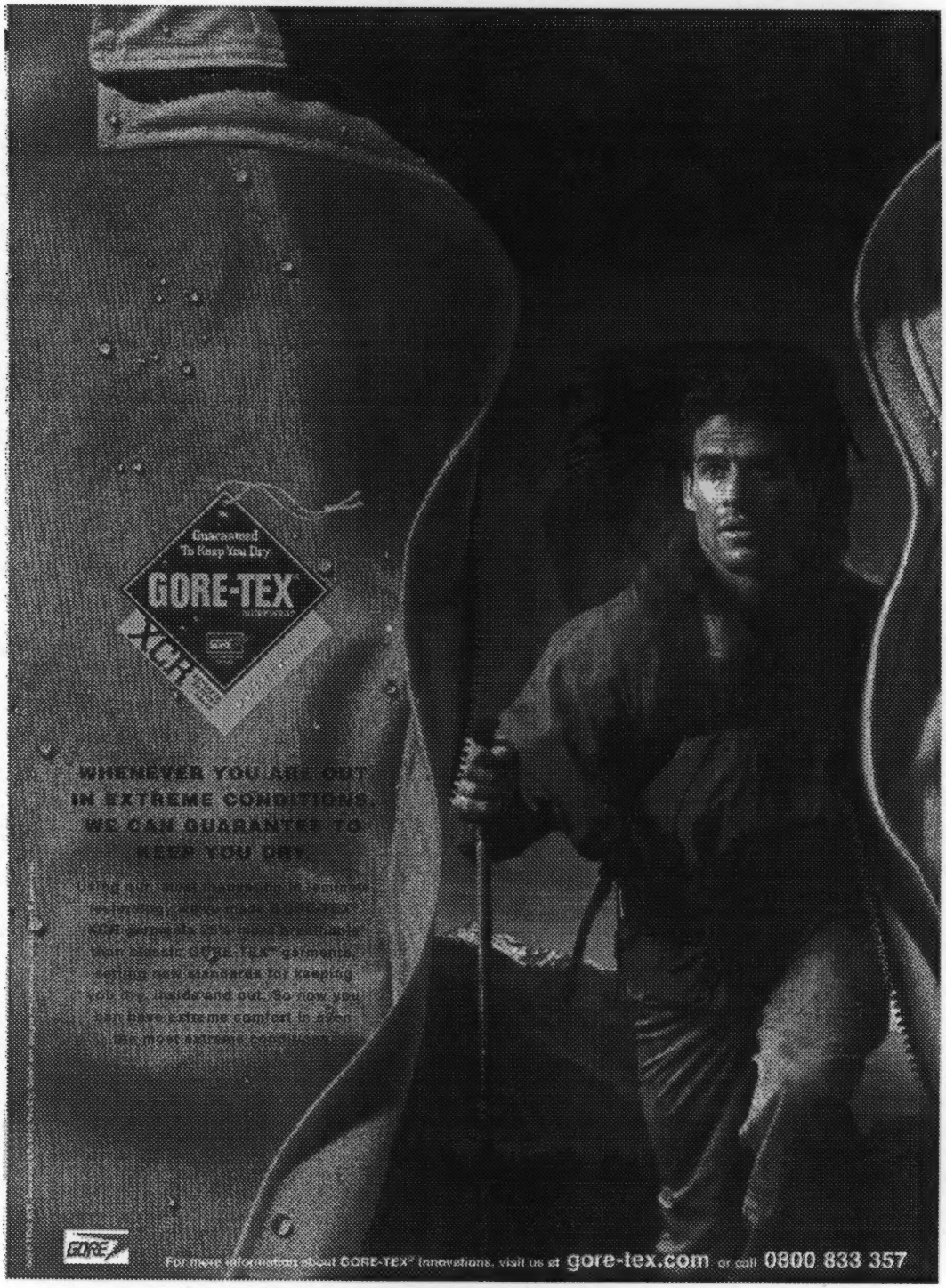

Figure 1 - Gore-Tex, (2001, December) <u>Climber</u>, Back Cover.

about white, talk about how race and sexuality are performed through masculinity. The performance of masculinity as a natural attachment to a male body also connects to a white male body, a heterosexual body. Popular definitions of masculinity implicitly rely on both sexuality and race to position gender. It is through the invisibility of the performance of whiteness and heterosexuality that masculinity becomes naturalized on the body of the white male.

The mélange of race, class and sexuality is important when considering masculinity, because it renders suspect all the ways in which people will try to talk about masculinity without addressing the relationship that masculinity has with sexuality and race. Gamal Abdel-Shehid (forthcoming) notes that the framework that tries to conceptualise a positive alternative (or alternative to) masculinity without reading the connections between masculinity, race and sexuality relies upon a strict rejection of the body. The argument within these types of conceptual models is that traditional masculinity is aligned with male bodies because masculine power has been enforced, held and exerted by men. The political assumption becomes that it is against the male body that we can act if we want to disrupt masculine power. Only through the renunciation of the male body can men move towards feminist goals. As Abdel-Shehid (forthcoming) rightly notes, this renunciation of the body also, by extension, extracts desire as well. Associated with the male body are "'animalistic' male desires for pain, violence, aggression," (Abdel-Shehid, forthcoming) which are (problematically) assumed to be bad. The point here is twofold: (a) by assuming desire associated with the male body to be universally bad, or oppressive, we are creating an essential direct (unbreakable) connection between male bodies, masculine power and male dominance.

This ignores any challenges made by men to male dominance, and it ignores the experiences of men with ambivalent relationships to dominant masculine power. (b) In order to theorize desire we must pay attention to the ways in which desire is framed by differences: gender, race and sexuality.

I want to suggest that one place to start the theorization of masculine desire is through the work of Eve Sedgwick (1985). Sedgwick's book Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire re-conceptualises our understanding of the ways men relate to each other. With the term male homosocial desire, Sedgwick (1985) places the relations between men on a continuum that goes from the homosocial to the homosexual. The continuum connects explicit sexual desire between men to the ways in which men relate to each other in (non sexual) homosocial contexts. The connection is important to note because of the (assumed) radical break between the two terms that we find in our present view towards the homosocial and homosexual. The homosocial, for example, "when Ronald Reagan and Jesse Helms get down to some serious logrolling on 'family policy'" (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 3), is assumed to be quite contrary to the homosexual.

The break in the continuum structures homophobia. Because Reagan and Helms would be disgusted by the connection to homosexuality, they will do all they can to create the break – one of which is the way they structure their 'family policy'. If Sedgwick's (1985) analysis is correct, however, the structure of their activity – "men-promoting-the-interests-of-men" (p. 3) – can be placed within the same sphere as male homosexuality – men loving men. So the dictates of the culturally determined break enforces a homophobia that creates a distinction between the two – said 'family policy.'

What we find is that the exact structures that are prescribed by masculinity then are also the same as those proscribed by masculinity. Sedgwick (1985) calls this "male homosexual panic" (p. 89). The best illustration of this is that the places where forced male homosocial interaction are high (military, sports), so too is the level of homophobia. This connects the radical break between male homosociality and homosexuality to ways in which power works against women. Structures of homophobia require that women are only vessels through which desire moves between men. As Sedgwick (1985) notes, in contexts of overt homosocial interaction, not only is the level of homophobia high, but also the level of misogyny.

The homosocial becomes instructive in the way we read the relations between genders, sexuality and masculinity, a possible place to read the dual constructions of race and masculinity (Abdel-Shehid, forthcoming). Sedgwick's (1985) analysis relies upon the use of a triangle to represent the way in which desire flows between men. In the male homosocial triangle, desire moves from one man to another through a woman. To maintain the break in the continuum, relations between men are also characterized by a power differential (Sedgwick, 1985). If this triangle shows power working between men, then the ways that white masculinity has been defined is directly in relation to both femininity and non-white masculinity.

Witness here as examples the study by Eric Lott (1993) on Blackface minstrelsy and Chris Bracken's (1998) Potlatch Papers. Lott details the ways in which the white men who performed blackface were not only stealing and appropriating the ways of the African-Americans that they impersonated, but also had an appreciation and desire for them as well: "Minstrel performers often attempted to repress through ridicule the real

interest in black cultural practices they nonetheless betrayed – minstrelsy's mixed erotic economy of celebration and exploitation" (Lott, 1993, p. 6). Lott's title, Love and Theft, reflects this mix. Lott continues, "the very form of blackface acts – an investiture in black bodies – seems a manifestation of the particular desire to try on the accents of 'blackness' and demonstrates the permeability of the color line" (P. 6). Lott's reading of the minstrel performance gives a reading of desire through the inter-racial homosocial, and opens up a space for the deconstruction of race – Lott's emphasis on love and theft involved in the minstrelsy performances demonstrates how the permeability of race is allowed when it is structured through white dominance. The homosocial construction of race is situated in the dominance of white men over black men – white men were only comfortable expressing the love for black men through structures of theft and domination.

Bracken's (1998) text also allows us to view the ways in which the desire works through the inter-racial homosocial. The banning of the potlatch by European men was justified at times by the suggestion that the potlatch encourages the prostitution of First Nations women. Thus, "white men justify colonial legislation by seeking – to borrow a sardonic phrase from Gayatri Spivak (1989, 297) – 'to save brown women from brown men" (Bracken, 1998, p. 49). The intentions of this claim is quickly betrayed by the fact that the same white men consider First Nations women to be "by nature prone to licentious desire anyway" (Bracken, 1998, p. 49). Bracken concludes, "the allegation that the patlatch fuels the sex trade simply provides a compelling excuse to crush a system of government that competes with the white administration" (p. 49).[10] The

[10] Bracken (1998) deals with all incarnations of the potlatch, and in this instance the original text refers to the patlatch so he has continued to refer to it as such.

allegation serves to hide the desire of white men to consume the non-white other, an allegation that reflects the opinion of the white men towards the non-white man and non-white women. This opinion exhibits the assumed power dynamic under the enforced heterosexuality of racial politics.

We can see from these two examples how homosocial relations help to structure racial interactions between men. While it definitely relies upon a relation of unequal power, the homosocial continuum suggests that this relationship (while maintaining that strict power differential) also encompasses desire for the 'subordinated' man (as Lott's [1993] title indicates).

By reading race and sexuality through the homosocial, we are able to extract more theoretically adequate analyses of masculine desire. Significantly, this complication opens up space for representations of masculinity that challenge traditional relations of power, thus opening up political space, as I hope to show through this project. To return to Halberstam (1998), I want to consider the main premise of her book – namely, that female masculinity exists not as a mimicry of dominant (male) masculinity, but as a distinct form of masculinity in itself; female masculinity is a part of the construction of dominant masculinity. The dislocation of masculinity from male bodies opens up a space for people to theorize how can masculinity be transformed to present a much more politically open space. If masculinity does not require a connection to male bodies, then the rejection of the male body is not necessary for a positive politics which can allow a multiplicity of experiences to occur. My project to articulate the codings of desire that are attached to masculine bodies becomes a first step towards a progressive and challenging politics of masculinity in the space of leisure.

The next chapter moves into the analysis by introducing the concept of style, which I will utilize as a technique through which the performance of masculine desire is articulated. From there I outline debates of style within the climbing community to show how this technique is performed in climbing discourses.

Chapter 3 – Style Matters: Rebellion, risk and masochism

At the outset of this chapter, I turn to the concept of style – the common denominator that I see underlying the analysis of climbing that I offer in the next two chapters. I argue that we need to understand both the contemporary debate around style in climbing, and psychoanalytical outlines of style to see how style can work as a technique of masculinity. Having outlined my theoretical understanding of how masculinity can work, I want to describe how style can be used as method to read the performance of masculinity on climbing bodies. I will use both theoretical frameworks to create my analysis of rock climbing. Drawing from Lacanian psychoanalysis, I read climbing style as an articulation of desire, desire that I would consider to 'work,' in Deleuze and Guattari's words, as desiring-production[11].

I. Articulations of style

The radical position of psychoanalysis, according to Shoshana Felman (1987), is that psychoanalysis has taken knowledge to come from a position of non-authority. By relying on Greek myths, dreams, and the confessions of patients, Freud was using "a knowledge that does not know what it knows, and is thus not in possession of itself" (Felman, 1987, p. 92). Felman describes this type of knowledge as literary knowledge:

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[11] I use both Lacan and Delueze in my analysis of style to access the reworking of style that Lacan offers, despite the difference between the two theories. The main difference between Deleuze and Lacanian psychoanlysis is where they locate the origin of the Oedipus complex. For Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1977) the Oedipus complex is an invention of social circumstances, one which is enhanced by the discourse of psychoanalysis and capitalism. Oedipus is a privileged form of analysis because it serves the founding fathers of psychoanalysis and their followers. Lacan and Žižek (1989), whom I draw upon in my analysis of style, finds the origin of the Oedipus complex, and the unconscious that follows from the complex, to be found in a psychic origin, a 'hard kernel' (Žižek, 1989, p. 47), the Lacanian Real, that is inherent in every human. Despite these differences, the analysis that follows both Deleuze and Lacan comes together to form, as I will show, a useful conception of style. By going to Lacan and Žižek here, I am not relying on the traumatic kernel within their theory, but merely the dislocation of a unified subject, a common point between Lacanian psychoanlysis and Deleuzian theory.

> "Unlike Hegelian philosophy, which *believes it knows all that there is to know*; unlike Socratic (or contemporary post-Nietzschean) philosophy, which *believes it knows it does not know* – literature, for its part, *knows it knows but does not know the meaning of its knowledge,* does not know *what* it knows" (Felman, 1987, p. 92, italics in original).

From this perspective, we can read climbing representations as literary knowledge, which knows it knows it means but does not know what it means. By understanding the representations of climbing as 'literary knowledge,' we open a space for reading climbing movements as both a way of finishing a climb and as a statement on masculinity and desire. A reading of climbing representation will require looking at the literary structures of the climber – what I call narratives – to assemble a reading of a text. These narratives would be constructed by looking at the punctuation of climbing, that is, the way in which climbers are able to articulate the way they climb through their bodies. This text would be an assemblage of the style of the climber, what might be called the illocutionary force of the movement of the climber. In her discussion of the pedagogy of psychoanalysis, Felman (1987) refers to the "dynamic in which statements function not as simple truths, but as performative speech acts" (p. 73). Translating this into climbing, I will look at how movements function not as a form of climbing, but how climbing functions as a (performative) form of speech. My reading then becomes a point of trying – to borrow from Felman again – "to see the illocutionary force, the didactic function, of the *utterance* as opposed to the mere content of the statement" (p. 72-73).

To illustrate the way in which a style of climbing can act as this illocutionary force, I want to draw on what Judith Miller (1991) calls "a possible encounter between psychoanalysis and style" (p. 151). The encounter she is referring to is Jacques Lacan's alteration of George Louis Leclerc, the comte de Buffon's definition of style. Buffon

(1921) suggested, in his speech on the occasion of his selection to the Academie Française, in 1753 that, "Style is the man himself" (p.296). Here Buffon sets down the limits of style, that is the ways in which great men, the men whom he was addressing in the Academie, maintain their glory in the eyes of the world. Style, in Buffon's eyes, is linked to immortality (it is the process by which great men assert their everlasting presence in the world) an elite point of view (true eloquence, states Buffon, only touches a small number of people sensitive to and concerned with things, thoughts and reason) and a sense of difference (his definition of the man of which he speaks is based on the ability to differ himself from others, to raise himself above the rest) (Miller, 1991). Buffon's definition, "Style is the man himself," outlines an elite group of rational men who are the creators of their own selves and immortality. In effect, he was describing those to whom he was talking in the hopes that he was also defining himself (Miller, 1991).

Lacan, in the first two pages of *Ecrits,* alters Buffon's definition slightly. "Style is the man to whom one speaks" is Lacan's new definition of style, or perhaps more accurately, new explanation of style (Lacan quoted in Miller, 1991, p. 143). Having inserted the question of language into this explanation, Lacan radically destabilises the ability of great men to define their style. Further, Lacan's addition allows us to recognize that the game of style is one played to produce an image of the whole man, the rational man. These rational men are still subject to the laws of language – they are no longer the authors of style; style has become both the man himself and the image received. As Miller explains, "The substitution of the word "himself" by "to whom one speaks"

indicates that identity is divided between what style represents and the one before whom it is represented" (p. 147).

That style is divided, (and by extension, that the man himself is divided) between signifier and signified is especially important when considering the issue of style in rock climbing. Often the debate over style happens within popular magazines devoted to rock climbing, or in the form of advertisements like the Grivel advertisement in Figure 2. In an effort to build the greatness of their products, companies like Grivel hope that the image of style projected forward will reflect back on their products. Not only do they want to promote an image of style, but also they want that image of style to be experienced as the identity of their product. The focus of the ad is not on a specific product of theirs, rather, they choose to focus on style. If their campaign works, style will not only be about elite climbers, but about elite climbers using their gear. Slavoj Žižek (1989) explains how the ideological function of advertising works to not only connect the product with the image, but the image with the product. His example shows how the classic image of the Marlboro commercial with the bronzed cowboy on the wide open prairie starts to function only when the ordinary American, who looks nothing like the cowboy, starts to identify with the land in the Marlboro commercial as their land – in effect, America becomes defined by the Marlboro commercial. In this case, style can be experienced only through the products made by Grivel, other manners being considered less honourable.

The question becomes more complex when we start to consider the ways in which the debate over style is taken outside of a marketing context. Of course, elite climbers, competing for a limited amount of sponsorship, are always in the process of marketing

Figure 2 - Grivel (2001) Climbing, 208, 35.[9]

[9] The caption states: "June 2000: Scott Backes, Steve House and Mark Twight repeated the Slovak route on Denali's South Face in 60 hours non-stop. Gear was pared to an unprecedented minimum. The margin of safety depended on a precarious balance between skill, self-discipline, and good fortune. The trio drew on almost sixty years of experience to refine Alpine Style into a Single Push, opening the gateway to an ideal. Smashing a mountain's defences with technology has become too easy. As equipment is refined, style must evolve in concert. Otherwise, challenges that we might address naturally, using hard-won courage and skill are brought within reach by less honourable means.
In the past climbers did more with less, and called it normal. Present-day successes are too-often measured on a numerical scale. The evolution of climbing rests in the hands of those willing to do more with less, faster (and free) because style matters.

themselves. However, style is also represented outside of an elite field, it serves as a point of distinction for many climbers in gyms and at local cliffs. The split subject runs counter to the premise of both Buffon's "The man himself", the self-created man, and against the self-created climber, people who excel in conditions of hardship, ones who struggle hard to produce themselves, ones who ultimately rely on only themselves in the position of climbing. This discourse of individualism runs strong through debates of climbing style and even in the discourse which surrounds rock climbing in general (Nettlefold & Stratford, 1999). Style in this discourse is a way to distinguish oneself from an(O)ther climber. Peter Nettlefold and Elaine Stratford (1999) point to the difference between climbing a mountain to get to the top and climbing a mountain in style as a founding point in the sport of rock climbing as opposed to mountaineering. With an increase in the number of mountains climbed it became important to climb with a certain attitude; "man had conquered the mountains; it now became important to do so with style" (Nettlefold & Stratford, 1999, p. 134). The increase of mountains climbed was also paired with an increase of mountain climbers, and style was seized as an useful tool for the individual who wanted to maintain the distinction between themselves and other climbers. As the new style mantra goes, "how one climbs is more important that what one climbs".

This discourse relies on the unified, self-created subject, a subject that Lacan's "style is the man to whom one speaks" nullifies through the necessary insertion of language. A subject that cannot exist. My reading of style in climbing, following Miller's (1991) reading of Buffon, suggests that the impossibility of the subject is erased through the normalization and recognition produced by style. Style works to cover up the

lack of the coherent subject through a process of repetition to oneself and those around us. To put this in Deleuzian terms, style is a way of coding, a territorialization that offers a possibility of fixing the subject, of creating a fixed identity, a repression of desire that operates through recognition by the other. This coding, as style, operates on the level of the body; advertisements and images focus on bodies, and thus make the main text of climbing style the human body.

The need for style to move into the realm of the body is explained by Žižek (1989). Operating from the understanding that style will always be split between the one who is represented and the one who receives the representation, split between the signifier and the signified, we can see that style operates as an objectification of a certain lack – the lack of the subject. Under this understanding, perhaps it might be true that "style is the man himself", but that man is nothing other than the impossibility of the fixed autonomous subject. In Žižek's terms, "the subject is nothing but the impossibility of its own signifying representation" (p. 208). The conditions through which we understand the subject are in fact the limitations of that subject – the failure of its own communication.

The debates around style turn to the body when this impossibility becomes too apparent. The body becomes, in the absence of a unified or positive subject, the presence of that lack. Again to quote Žižek, "it embodies, literally 'gives body' to, the ultimate failure of the signifying representation of the subject." Style (and subjectivity, as I will argue in later chapters) is presented through the body as physical proof of the "man himself." However, since that body is a representation, a message from one to another, the physical proof is less proof of the subject than the failure of its communication.

Importantly, the elite construction of style as represented in magazines and popular climbing media, and the distinctions created by style, are held and augmented through the embodiment of style.

The discussion of climbing needs to be framed from this analysis, through not only the equipment and techniques used, but also as the way that style works as a regulatory force on the body of the climber. This understanding points to the difference between how my discussion of style differs from the traditional limits of the debate in the climbing community; my focus is on the relation between the embodiment of style and the construction of an identity, specifically, white masculinity.

I. The Benefits of Good Style: Acceptable and unacceptable risk

> If climbing is something more than conquering physical space and having a good time, then questions of style are important. However, many climbers simply want to get to the top and enjoy themselves. Style is the individual's own concern, and he may wish to keep that concern private. It is really nobody else's business. I hope you will aspire to climb in good style because I wish you the maximum rewards of good climbing. But you must define the standards of climbing excellence for yourself. (Loughman, Learning to Rock Climb, 1981. p. 130)

> On the face of it, it is debatable that the fashion in which we go about climbing rocks is of any consequence to anyone. We just want to get up safely, and if we ignore decorum here and there, who cares? But a funny thing happens once we are even moderately skilled. Simply getting up at all costs is not very satisfying. We slowly realize that the way we get up is both the means and the end. Virtually anyone who sticks with climbing comes to this conclusion. (Long, How to Rock Climb, 1993, p. 135)

While my concern for style started with a theoretical framework, the debate around climbing style is a long-standing debate in the climbing community, ranging from discussions around the politics of bolting routes, to what exactly constitutes a free

ascent.[13] As both of the above quotations suggest, climbing style is about a particular set of individual standards, which could ostensibly have little to do with the rest of the climbing community. However, the psychoanalytical reading of style suggests that style is in fact a set of prescriptive signs that privilege certain types of climbing. We can see this operating in both Loughman (1981) and Long's (1993) statement – style is the way to 'good' climbing. To read the consequences of these sets of prescriptions, we need to understand climbing style as a broader category than that suggested by the traditional debates surrounding climbing. My discussion will examine the broader aspects of this category through a reading of two latent aspects of style – risk and masochism. Using articles and advertisements from popular climbing magazines I will connect the debates surrounding climbing style to the way in which it operates on the bodies of those involved – as a way of privileging a certain body within certain styles.

Traditional arguments about climbing style are almost always related to the increasing or decreasing levels of danger involved in the activity. Debates over the past 50 years have constantly revolved around the use of protection on a route and the definition of what is and is not a 'free ascent'. The controversy over protection has been constant because of ever-changing technology – as technology gets better, the danger of climbing certain routes decreases. A "free ascent" is generally acknowledged as when a climber climbs a certain route on a rock face without any artificial aids. Protection placed in the rock is allowed provided it is only there in the case of a fall and the climber

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[13] Rock climbing routes on cliffs are often climbed by using bolts which are drilled into the rock. These bolts are permanent and much safer than other types of protection on climbs. As a climber ascends a certain route, they clip their rope into the bolt to ensure that if they fall, they won't fall far. Free climbing, or a 'free ascent,' is when a climber uses only the rock to ascend the cliff, and ropes are only used in the case of a fall. It is generally only considered a free ascent if the climber makes it from the start to finish without falling.

does not place any weight on the protection along the way up. Debate arises if the climber practices sections of the route beforehand in a safer configuration or hangs on protection in the rock for rests during the ascent. Both of these debates base themselves in certain distinctions between what is 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' risk, distinctions which have been constantly changing throughout the years.

The outcome of these debates, what gets to be defined as 'good style,' relates to the benefits of climbing. These debates structure the benefits of climbing; they decide the end towards which one climbs. The benefits of a good style, as Loughman (1981) suggests, is what climbing is all about – or as Long (1993) states, it is about "the spirit of adventure and exploration" (p. 136). The benefits of good style are explained differently in other inserts into the debate on style: in describing the style of his 60-hour, non-stop ascent of a hard alpine route on Denali mountain in Alaska, Mark Twight (2000) states, "honour means winning, which requires survival. This style of climbing isn't poetic," (p. 106). Scott House, who often climbs with Twight, describes their fast and lightweight style as, "the simpler we make things, the richer the experience" (House quoted in Pagel, 2002, p. 110). Hans Florine uses style as a benchmark, a way of comparison – "I would like people to do [all] things in the same style, so then we can accurately compare times" (quoted in McNamara, 2001, p. 99). These statements, by some of the climbers who are heralding themselves as leaders who are pushing the evolution of style, describe style as a way of both increasing the benefits of climbing, but perhaps more importantly, as a distinction between climbers. The benefits of good style are understood as the distinctions made from one climber to another, distinctions that become the building blocks for the creation of masculinity through climbing style.

Working with similar (problematic) concerns for the differentiations of climbing style, Neil Lewis (2000), in an article from Body and Society, tries to locate the benefits of a particular style of climbing, what he terms as adventure climbing,[14] in the resistance it provides to modern regimes of the body. In the article, "adventure climbing is presented as an act of intentionality that thwarts the desensitizing and pacifying proclivity of the body under modernity" (Lewis, 2000, p. 58). For Lewis, the embodied agency that results from climbing directly contradicts the overwhelming push in modernity to remove oneself from one's own body and act without being conscious of one's body. The result is that the climber's body is transformed into a political arena in which the climber resists the global imperatives of the modern age. The climber, having been in a relationship with the natural environment through the process of climbing, is inscribed upon by the rock face, through gashes, bruises, and memories, so that "through its very engagement with nature, the climbing body becomes natural. It returns to nature" (Lewis, 2000, p. 75).

However, Lewis's (2000) claim relies on the argument that modernity has disembodied the human subject, so that any act of embodied human agency can be seen as a resistance to the larger narrative of modernity. Yet this claim folds away from a universal potential of bodies towards a specific act only available to privileged bodies. For Lewis, death, decay and violence are forms of action that are constituted on the body – they are compartmentalized within our everyday life – disembodied through modern

[14] Adventure climbing is defined as climbing that only uses protection that the climber can remove from the rock, and only uses such protection in the case of a fall. Adventure climbing is distinguished from sport climbing, which uses permanent bolts placed in the rock as protections and from aid climbing which uses mechanical aids to pull oneself up a rock face. My use of Lewis' article lies in the location that he places the benefits of climbing, not in the style of climbing that he is speaking to. The fact that he describes these benefits as a part of only one style of climbing over other is merely proving my point that style serves to distinguish and normalize climbers.

society. He states, "the endemic incursions of scientific knowledge and professional 'expert' systems have accentuated the distance from everyday life and encounters with death. Death has become isolated, abstracted from the flow of human experience and transformed into just another 'problem' to be fitted into our busy daily schedules" (Lewis, 2000, p. 60). Adventure climbing provides resistance to this trend, in Lewis' view, by reconnecting the climber with risk as a way to encounter death and violence in everyday life (and we need to keep in mind that this distinction elevates adventure climbing over other forms of climbing). This can only be true if your body fits into the modern ideal that is part of the narrative of modernity. Non-white bodies, female bodies, homosexual bodies can feel the difference because that difference is inscribed upon the body. For climbing to be an act of resistance your body must fit the ideal, because the narrative of modernity upon which Lewis builds his argument applies only to certain privileged bodies, and even then, not universally. Thus Lewis' claim that the experience of death is left out of modernity, and that through climbing the body is able to experience the sense of death as a natural part of living privileges a white male heterosexual body, a body which is protected by scientific knowledge and professional expertise.

Many others, including climbers and non-climbers, have remarked upon the resistance to the modern lifestyle in climbing. Sherri Ortner (1999), in her ethnography of mid-to late-20th-century Himalayan mountaineering describes one of the aspects of mountaineering as the counter-modernity game. Ortner (1999) states, "For these men, modernity is the problem, and mountaineering is the solution. Where the modern is vulgar and materialistic, mountaineering is sublime and transcendental" (p.38). While Ortner is speaking directly about the experiences of mountaineers in the Himalayas, this

statement has resonance in North American climbing magazine articles. Matt Samet (2002) writes, "bouldering is freedom, an escape not only from the vicissitudes of life, but also from other climbers...I'm still trying to re-create those transcendental moments of weightlessness" (p. 106). As Ortner properly notes, these tendencies towards a counter-modern culture are often mixed up with notions of masculinity, similar to my critique of Lewis' position. These connections are important to acknowledge in order to avoid the romanticism that is held within Lewis' piece, a romanticism that ignores the specific effects created by the masculinity attached to the counter-modern discourse. Romanticism in this case works to hide the privileging of bodies, disguising the masculinity and whiteness of those who climb to negotiate the 'disembodiment' of modernity.

To provide a clearer picture of the working of style, it is important to read the counter-modern discourse alongside that of masculinity, to make the connections between rebellion and masculinity, exploration and the construction of climbing as a 'white' sport, risk and masochism more explicit. The two readings in this chapter seek to demonstrate that style, read through these connections, is about a recoding of desire, a system which allows for flows of desire to be decoded in certain ways and then recoded to flow alongside capitalist modes of reproduction. Style is a type of normalization that allows for individual distinctions, provided that the individual fits within certain codes of subjectivity.

II. Exploration and 'Natural' Risk.

In the summer of 2000, four professional American climbers made their way to the southern Valleys of Kyrgyzstan for a North Face sponsored climbing trip. The North

Face is a influential outdoor clothing company that sponsors extreme sport expeditions throughout the world. In an excellent demonstration of the cultural ignorance that propels many of these expeditions, their dictum is "Never Stop Exploring." As we can see from the text in a recent advertisement for The North Face, this slogan applies to areas especially beyond the reach of western knowledge. The ad features a picturesque shot of climbers approaching Mount Everst, and the large text on the ad reads " Pete Athens. 13th Everest Expidition. 6Th Summit. Mountain 7 feet higher than before" (The North Face, (2001), p. 37). The smaller text explains,

> "How tall is the tallest mountain in the world? No one knew exactly. But on May 5, 1999, Pete Athans and his North Face team place a Global Positioning System at the summit, thus allowing scientists to measure Everest at 29,035 feet. Seven feet higher than previously recorded. The North Face. Clothing and Equipment. Expedition tested. Athlete approved."

The top of Mount Everest is a prime example of an Orientalised[15] (Said, 1979) nature which is both known (the height is measured accurately) but unknown (how long have we thought it a different height).[16] As a foreign (to American climbers) country, Kyrgyzstan was the destination of one previous North Face expedition in 1995 (Child, 2000). It will be my argument that the North Face dictum, and the fact of sponsorship, is of tremendous importance. The trip, the subsequent events and the creation of style through the controversy would not have happened without either of these two factors.

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[15] "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between 'the Orient' and…'the Occident'" (Said, 1978, p. 2). Said's term is taken as form of knowledge that constitutes an eastern object through a Western subject. The Western discourse of Orientalism, which is a racist discourse, constructs the orient through knowledge that is as much ideological as it is accurate.

[16] Interestingly enough, we can also read this ad to show the nervous condition that is created from this contradictory space occupied by places like Everest (and, I would argue, the Kara Su valley in which the following story takes place). Because it is both known and unknown the slogan *needs* to be 'Never Stop Exploring'. For more on the position of Mount Everest in the colonial and post-colonial climbing present, see Slemon (1998).

An article that described the experience of that trip starts off somewhat dramatically:

> 'Dear Friends, Tommy Caldwell, Beth Rodden, John Dickey and myself are headed to the mountains of Kyrgyzstan for some fun in the sun. I wish you all happy and safe travels this summer and I pledge to do the same. After all, I don't have to be able to outrun AK-47 toting terrorists – just Beth' – Jason "singer" Smith's email on July 25, 2000, the day of the teams departure for Kyrgyzstan
>
> Right down to the type of weapon that would come so close to killing him, Smith's prediction couldn't have been more wrong. Just three weeks after sending that note, Smith, Caldwell, Rodden, and Dickey were running for their lives, AK-47 rounds spitting in their wake. By the time their six-day ordeal was over they had experienced the horrors of war: captivity, assault from small arms and mortar fire, deprivation, and ultimately a harrowing escape. They also emerged from the mountains as witnesses of violent deaths.' (Takeda, 2000, p. 87)

The four climbers, as the story goes, were kidnapped by members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), a "terrorist group" with ties to the Taliban (which, as one author pointed out, connects them back to the American Military [Bouchard, 2001]). They were initially captured on a 1000 foot cliff, where they had spent the night. From this cliff they were taken, along with one Kyrgyz prisoner, towards Uzbekistan. On the way they encountered Kyrgyz troops who had been alerted to the kidnapping of the climbers. The IMU killed the Kyrgyz prisoner and fled with the climbers by nightfall. Slowly over six days, the toils of the journey wore the whole group down, having only a dozen Powerbars and a bit of yogurt to eat. In the end, the climbers managed to escape from their captors by pushing one of them over a cliff (presumably to his death) when they were left alone with the guard for a few hours. Or at least that is what the climbers say (Child, 2000; Takeda, 2000)

Before I discuss the controversy that surrounds the event, I want to point to three aspects of importance. First, this is a story of the construction of style in climbing, yet it

has very little climbing within the text. Style is not solely concerned with movement, but with identity; I have said before, it is the construction of masculinity, femininity, whiteness and heterosexuality that is at stake during debates of style. Second, these questions of identity are only framed through the production of capitalism, in this case through the professional arena of climbing. Powerbar, The North Face, at least two international magazines, publishing companies and a movie studio are set to gain financially from this expedition specifically.[17] Third, the identities constructed through this event are wrapped up with the controversy that surrounds it, they are folded within the controversy and rely upon it for their construction. The controversy is an important aspect of this story, because it illustrates the construction of identities based on notions of masculinity, femininity, whiteness and heterosexuality.

There are three main articles about the event that I will use for my analysis. First, Greg Child wrote an article for Outside magazine in November 2000. Climbing magazine ran a feature article in December 2000 written by Pete Takeda, senior editor. These first two articles described event from the point of the climbers. Child had the chance (as the representative of the climbers from The North Face) to talk to each climber about the trip and construct the article from there. Takeda drew much of his information from one participant, John Smith. The third article, appeared in Climbing magazine in November of 2001, a full year after the other two articles were written, and was written by John Bouchard who said he took 8 months of research to find out how the event was experienced by the people in Kyrgyzstan.

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[17] While they do not make any reference in their advertising to the expedition, The North Face uses some of the climbers to sell their products, as does Powerbar. Climbing and Outside have printed articles on the event (along with letters to the editor), and there is one book published (Over the Edge by Greg Child) and

Ostensibly, the controversy starts with the death of the IMU soldier – called in different articles, Su, Yusef, or Ravshan Sharipov. The death is a controversy because the Americans said he "hit a ledge 30 feet down with a crack. Then Su rolls off into the darkness, over the 1,500-foot cliff to the river below." (Child, 2000, p. 113) However, Ravshan Sharipov (who occupies the same character as Su) says that he passed out from being overtired, and that he woke up and they were gone (Bouchard, 2001). All three authors make mention of the fact that Sharipov was captured by the Kyrgyz army and questioned after the events. Only Child does not include it in his article; it is mentioned in an update on the article in a later issue.

But this is only one aspect of the controversy. The climbers claim that they had no warning that the area was potentially dangerous. Contradictory reports say that the original expedition leader cancelled the trip because it was too dangerous. The climbers also say that they had little warning in the area itself, and that if it was a dangerous place to be the army would have stopped them. On the other hand, Bouchard documents the ways in which the Kyrgyz army and travel agents claim that they had recommended that the climbers leave the area and find other places to climb in Kyrgyzstan.

I really did(n't) kill him.

Tommy Caldwell, one of the climbers, plays an interesting role in the two stories told from the climbers' perspective. In the article from Climbing magazine, printed one month after Child's (2000) article in Outside, he is quoted as saying that although he understands the climbing community's desire to know what happened, "Our [publicity]

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one set to be published (by John Bouchard). And Kathy Kennedy and Frank Marshall, producers of E.T., have intentions to make a blockbuster movie out of the event (Garrison, 2002).

agent says it's not a good idea to say very much at all[18]" (Takeda, 2000, p. 92). In this article, the climbers say that they all overpowered Yusef and pushed him off the cliff to his presumed death, and this was the way in which they were able to make their escape.

In the article by Child (2000), Caldwell plays a different role. The difference comes at the middle of the article at the key point of killing Su. In the scene the climbers are hiking up the side of a cliff, with Su being their only guard for the time being, and the climbers all know that they need to kill Su to get away. Dickey and Smith are the instigators, however, Caldwell thought that they might not do it. Although Caldwell has been reluctant to take part in any discussion of killing previously, he moves past the two other men on the trip and throws Su off the cliff into the darkness. Upon realising that he killed a person, Child states that he was "outside of himself," and Smith and Dickey try to console him by saying "We did nothing wrong, we just saved our lives. When we get home we'll say we all did it ok. But now we have to get the fuck out of here." (Child, 2000, p. 113)

Beth Rodden, Caldwell's girlfriend, runs up to him and consoles him by telling him she loves him more than ever because he saved her life. And it is here that we have the start of a pact… a pact they followed in all other media presentations, that "they all did it" (Child, 2000, p. 113). However, it is Caldwell who breaks the pact, as the end of Child's article describes:

> Then one night Caldwell phones me from the Roddens' house in Davis. He has been reticent all along, reluctant to talk. This time, though, he sounds sure of himself. "This is the deal," he says. He takes a deep breath. "I was the one who pushed Su. It was something I wasn't prepared to do, so when

[18] This is the only comment given about the interaction between Rodden and Caldwell and their agent. The comment points to the multiple layers of production that are invested within this event, and the representations of it.

> I did it I was pretty shaken up. Jason and John said that we would say we all did it. That helped me a lot. I'm still coming to terms with it. (p. 114)

Although the climbers and their friends claim that their story is one hundred percent true, somewhere along the line they have also made it known that they have not told the whole story. This distortion of events reveals the construction of style within this whole story. It is not just the facts, it is just a narrative. This narrative also reveals the slipping of positions of risk, climbing, and identity. There is very little climbing going on, yet the position of risk within the climbing narrative (which is exposed as somewhat of an over-dramatization) allows it to be considered as climbing. Through the tale of killing, we have a community being built (of homosocial bonding and struggle) through these textual folds that reduces the "other" to a part of nature that needs to be dealt with. The construction of a style of climbing through the pact is the construction of both white masculinity and femininity. This construction relies upon a consideration of Su as an unimportant 'local.'

Locals are natural risks.

While Caldwell was reluctant, Smith was, on the other hand, quite ready to kill someone. In an interview for the article in Climbing, he states, "People have been fighting for 5000 years. That's the way things have been done, and unfortunately killing people has been a part of it" (Takeda, 2000, p. 92). In fact we might say that Smith was quite excited about the death; to quote from the first article: "When we reached the army camp… I said to everyone that if there was a week in my life I would want to relive, then this would be it. To experience every human emotion in such a short time, under those intense, life-threatening circumstances. I would gladly go back" (Child, 2000, p. 114)

In this perspective, the "political troubles" of the area are just another part of the climbing expedition. Child likens Smith's comments to the way he has felt about climbing expeditions that have resulted in the death of some members (and his near death). This attitude is similar to the response of a friend of the group, responding to Bouchard's claim that the Americans put the lives of Kyrgyz military needlessly at risk by being in the hot zone. He states, "Bouchard asserts that the climbers should not have been there because it was too dangerous. Are you kidding me? The nature of alpine climbing is going to dangerous places. Who is he to say that encountering unexpected rockfall is acceptable and unexpected gunfire is not" (Karn, 2001, p. 17). Thus, the local becomes an "other" equated with the natural risks of any rock climb. It is not only in the letters to the editors that this racism is encountered. This positioning of Su, and all of the local residents of the valley happens throughout the text, and presumably in the fantasies of the climbers. There are often descriptions of the ruthless behaviour of the IMU rebels, from their abstinence of alcohol and cigarettes (which is regarded as odd, and even threatening to the Americans),[19] to the fact that they took time to pray during a gun battle (over a dead body) and the insistence that the "swarthy" soldiers, "like the areas inhabitants, were unbelievably tough" (Takeda, 2000, p. 90).

The risk constructed through this narrative is a requirement of the style of climbing they were engaged in (just as the naturalized 'other' masculinity is required for the construction of white masculinity); the Kyrgyzstan expedition needed to have the risks of an "exploration" trip to be qualified as an expedition worthy of style. Bouchard's (2001) comments, which contest the legitimacy of the climbers' stories, does not contest

[19] Smith tries to calm the IMU soldiers by offering them cigarettes as soon as he meets them, a tactic that he has found "useful in the Third World for defusing tense situations." (Child, 2000, p. 107).

the ways in which these expeditions require risks to receive glory. His comments then lend credibility not to the Kyrgyzstan expedition, since in his eyes the risks were not honorable risks, but to other expeditions that take honorable risks, which may or may not include the orientalist view of the foreign country.

Bodies of Style.

The discrepancies between the accounts of what happened near the cliffs of the Kara-Su Valley of Kyrgyzstan reveal the creation of community through the narrative of adventure. Similar to Buffon's vision of style, this community is based upon the elite actors within it. The actors themselves promote a style through which they attain their glory. Buffon was doing so in his speech to the Açademie, and the climbers are doing so in the promotion of certain communities of style. By relying on risk to push the limits of the body, climbers are defining style not as part of a written text, but as part of the text of the body.

The text of style, written on the body, can only be applied to certain bodies, or, more accurately, it privileges certain bodies for certain styles. The ability to have good style (and what is defined as good style) is dependent in part on the body of the climber. This can be seen in the way in which Rodden is described throughout the narrative of these articles. The focus of the authors is often on the way in which Rodden's body is frailer, more susceptible to risk, than the three men. For example, Child (2000) points to Rodden's weakness in relation to what the terrorists might do to her:

> Rodden, as the only woman, is particularly apprehensive, her mind racing, thinking, 'what'll these guys do to me?'
>
> As they pack, Abdul [a IMU soldier] comes across a photo of a smiling Beth and Tommy, arm in arm. He points to the young couple, and in sign language asks if they are together. 'Yes – married,' Dickey says

> instantly. If the rebels think Rodden is married, he reasons, maybe she'll be safer. (Child, 2002, p. 108)

One of the few times that Takeda (2000) quotes Rodden, she states, "I probably cried for hours a day, I wanted so much to be with my family" (p. 90). Bouchard (2001) even notes on several occasions that the Kyrgyzstan army has specific orders to help out the Americans and to pay careful attention to the woman. Rodden is not allowed to access the style of risk in the same manner that Smith, Caldwell, or Dickey is. She is always connected to her family, or more revealingly, to her boyfriend. To be sure, they were in a situation of danger, and she probably wasn't the only one who cried, or was scared. However, the differences between the position given to her in the narratives and to the men on the trip are quite distinct. From this we can see how style is not only a matter of how you climb, but also a prescriptive strategy of how to climb. Rodden's body prescribed the style of her narrative (crying, connected to men, being protected), at the same time as the bodies of the men on the trip prescribed the roles they were allowed to play. Importantly, this is more than just the need to have good style, but is in fact a strategy to mobilize power through the inheritance of specific codes of masculinity and the body (think of the benefits Caldwell might get for telling the story which focuses on him – movie privilege and a 'clear' conscience when the public believes the story are two possible benefits). While this example has focused on the creation of risk as a style of climbing, I turn now to a reading of masochism within rock climbing to examine in more depth the working of masculinity and desire within style.

III. Tracing Desire: Masochism in rock climbing

Throughout this reading, I am interested in the ways in which some styles of rock climbing are structured by a relationship with masochism. I will not suggest that

climbing is masochistic. For reasons that I will discuss below, climbing does not signify masochism, but rather, masochism signifies something other than climbing, something which is, however, integral to some climbing identities. It is in this way that masochism operates as a trace in climbing, a limit surrounding climbing – it does not become our definition of climbing, but instead it is that which is absent from the definition that enables us to understand what climbing can mean in some circumstances. Climbers will disavow their relationship to masochism, and by doing so create a distance that enables themselves and others to understand their positioning of climbing. Masochism structures climbing by being absent.

As a starting point I want to give examples of where we can find this type of masochism in narratives of climbing. Pain is often contradictorily wrapped up in a relationship with the experiences of the benefits of climbing. The benefits that I discussed above are often seen as a product of a journey through pain. Matthias Beebe (1997) illustrates this in an article on a particularly hot climb – where the sun caused hallucinations and pain, only to overcome the sun and climb into the shade where he realized his potential to be a god. First he describes the pain:

> I said, 'what is thirst but a mild discomfort?'
>
> We weakened.
>
> Anne proclaimed, 'What is physical weakness but an excuse for a lazy constitution?'
>
> I began to worry, though, when white hot flashes of light graced my peripheral vision – the telltale signature of oncoming heat stroke. I worried more for Anne, who seemed to be in worse shape than I was. I was horrified when, on the next pitch, I looked down to see her pulling around a 5.11 corner with a stream of blood bubbling profusely in two trails out her nose, on the rock and down, down, in spiralling drops. (Beebe, 1997, p. 70)

And then the god:

> The climbing was so easy, compared to the rest of the route, that the devil himself couldn't pull me off. I was coasting now on the momentum of my toil, of cruxes fought, won and lying dead, hours and hours below.
>
> We are all of us gods. (p. 72)

The pain was an integral part of the climb and of the feeling achieved at the end of the climb. And this pain (mythic or real) does seem to be celebrated in climbing circles – for example, an article covering a competition climb stated, "with competitors throwing candy to the audience, ripping off their tank tops to reveal numbers 'pinned' to their chests (they were actually glued, but the crowd – and NBC – loved it)" (Hudon, 2000, p. 44). It is this description of the competition that can allow us to glimpse at the ways in which elements of a sexualized pleasure in pain are celebrated in climbing narratives.

The passage of climbers through sexualised pain is also represented in climbing advertisements. An advertisement for climbing walls comes out and attempts to connect climbing discourses to masochism through the use of the slogan "Pain is Good" (Passe Montagne, 2002, p. 75). Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the ways in which pain is both glorified and commented on in humorous fashion. The Patagonia advertisement (Figure 3) allows for a romantic view of the pain inflicted by climbing, while the Boreal advertisement (Figure 4) jokes about the humiliation involved in climbing, and at the same time connects the humiliation to a male gendered subject, humiliated by a feminized rock – and sexualises that relationship.

But to leave it there is not satisfactory, these actions were not masochistic, the numbers were glued on in reality, and the heat stroke was of serious concern (albeit only until they hit the shade, where it returns to its place as a good story). It would be difficult, under a sustained critical discussion, to classify all the climbers engaged in these types of activities as 'perverse' (as Freud would classify masochism [Freud,

The figure on page 59, (figure 3), featured an advertisement by Patagonia, found in Rock and Ice, 111, page 31, published in 2002. The material was not included because it would have infringed on copyright restrictions. The image featured a close up photograph of a male pair of hands. The hands were covered in cuts and scrapes, they had dirt in the fingernails and in the cracks in the skin, and were posed with one hand resting on the other. At the top of the page, in small font uppercase letters was "ALPINE MANICURE" and below that in larger bolded letters, "committed to the core." The name Patagonia is featured on the bottom right hand corner, and the contact information is on the bottom left corner. Below this information reads "forty pitches of the bear's tooth take their toll. Jim Bridwell in Alaska. Photo, Glenn Dummire. © Patagonia."

SHE WEIGHS A TON, WITH A FACE THAT MAKES YOU CRINGE. AND YET YOU CAN'T KEEP YOUR DIRTY LITTLE HANDS OFF HER.

Stick it with the Matrix. Handcrafted with Lorica, offering the ultimate in sensitivity and unrivaled comfort. They're everywhere.

BOREAL
www.borealusa.com

Figure 4 - Boreal, (2002). Climbing, 216, 2.

1924/1959]). Or if we wish to abandon the problematic definition of masochism as perverse, as I will argue later on, this type of climbing does not constitute climbing as a universal; it is only one way of climbing among many. In this sense, masochism is one of the limits which are drawn into climbing to define our understandings of climbing, however, that is an entirely different suggestion than one which says that climbing is masochistic. My suggestion that we cannot call climbing masochistic is based on an understanding of the trace – a word I chose from Derrida's consideration of language and difference.

The Limit of Climbing: Understanding the Trace.

My reluctance to classify climbing as masochistic is framed by a scepticism about locating the essence of climbing – the origin of the instinct of climbing, a reading that will allow us to glimpse at the inner core of the climbing ego. The need to find the origin of climbing – whether it be in masochism, as some sceptical critiques might say, or in finding freedom in the hills, which, as we will see, is the discourse in some climbing circles – is to look for what Derrida (1967/1974) calls the 'transcendental signifier' of climbing. The search for the transcendental signifier in climbing is to find that meaning of climbing which halts the debate surrounding what pleasures (and what pains) can be found within climbing. It would "place a reassuring end to the reference from sign to sign" (Derrida, 1967/1974, p. 49).

The transcendental signifier, in Derrida's (1967/1974) theory, works as that signifier that (impossibly) locates the origin of a sign, and in doing so manages to secure meaning once and for all. Derrida argues that since there is no possible origin that in itself does not have an origin that would go back further, the idea of a transcendental

signifier is a search that cannot be finished. This search is what Derrida calls the metaphysics of presence. What is not taken into account in the "metaphysics of presence" (Derrida, 1967/1974) is the ways absence works to structure meaning. The absence is what is known as the trace. And through this absence, "the trace is not only the disappearance of origin – within the discourse that we sustain and according to the path that we follow it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a non-origin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin" (Derrida, 1967/1974, p. 61)

The absence of climbing, at some points within the presence of climbing, is masochism, it is that which is different from itself that nonetheless is integral to its meaning. It is the difference between the two that allows them to be singular and to have meaning outside of each other. As Derrida (1998) states about speaking sounds, "the difference between two phonemes, which enables them to exist and to operate, is inaudible. The inaudible opens the two present phonemes to hearing, as they present themselves" (p. 387). The difference that allows climbing to be present is absent, it is masochism. This difference is intimately held within the trace that allows us to understand climbing.

Key to understanding this difference is to note that the space between two meanings, between climbing and masochism, is always implied in the definitions of each. Figure 5, a rather odd advertisement, considering the lack of connection to the activity of climbing, for a climbing harness perhaps can illustrate the shared limit of both climbing and masochism. When I showed the image to a non-climbing friend, outside of the context of the climbing magazine it appeared in, her first reaction was to ask if it was a

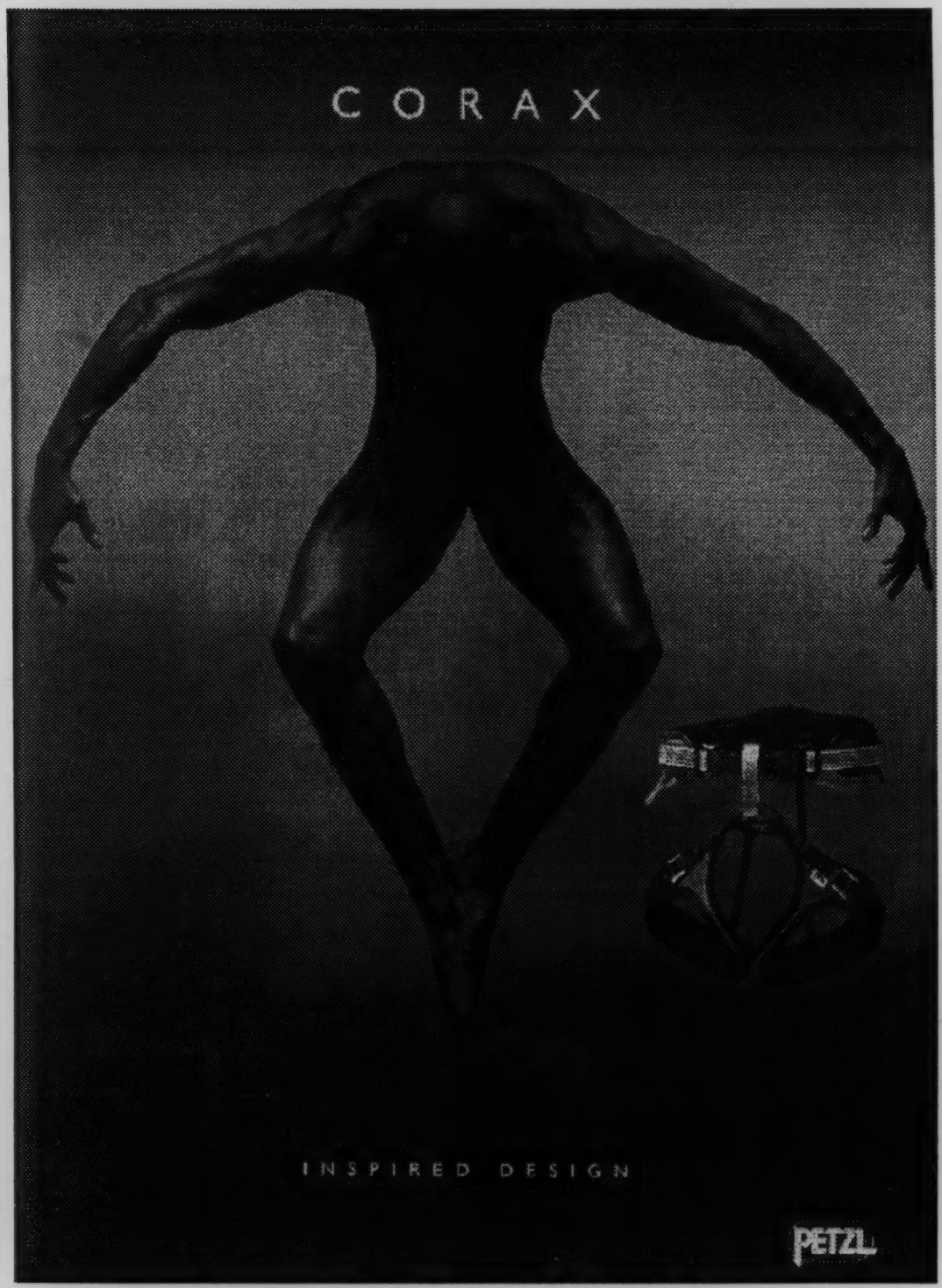

Figure 5 - Petzl, (2002) Rock and Ice, 110, Back Cover.

sex toy. Climbers reading this image may recognize not the masochistic overtones, but instead the way in which this new type of harness is designed to fit on the body.

Figure 5 is also, on a related note, a key to understanding the place of black climbers within media discourses. There are three images of black men in climbing advertisments that I have seen: this one; one other done in similar style by the same company (although not as sexualised, but still comparing the black body to the equipment) (Petzl, 2002), and most telling of all, an ad in which a black man with dyed-blond hair is climbing under the banner of "Unleash the Beast Within" (Mammut, 1997). All three advertisements belie a racist attitude that black men are closer to primitive and materiality than are white men. The fantasy portrayed in these images is the hope that white men will be able to connect to "the beast within" through the black male body. This reminds us that the fantasy of counter-modernity that Lewis (2000) describes is a white fantasy that, as my discussion further on will show, can only be lived through an identification with a victimised other. As Lott's (1993) study of minstrelsy performances demonstrated, this identification is both a desire for and subordination of the victimised other.

Deleuze and the Perverse Reading of Masochism

Freud's analysis of masochism, which is the most pervasive analysis of masochism in modern society, has been based around the idea of the perverse, which is opposed to the non-perverse, which is, as Kaja Silverman (1992) states, "the 'true' or 'right' [as] heterosexual penetration" (p. 185). This definition of perversion is problematic, and perhaps it is better to take a different approach to an analysis of masochism than one that decides the 'right' or 'truth' of the matter. Deleuze (1967/1971;

Deleuze & Gauttari, 1980/1987) in his study of Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, and in discussions within A Thousand Plateaus, is not as concerned with the perverse aspect of masochism, but with the effects of masochism. Such a view would consider masochism as "less a destruction than an exchange and circulation" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 155).

In his collaboration with Félix Guattari, Deleuze's (1980/1987) descriptions of masochism focus on the involvement of masochism in the constitution of the subjectivity of the masochist. The masochist creates a framework for subjectivity that can only be filled with pain. "That there are other ways, other procedures than masochism, and certainly better ones, is besides the point; it is enough that some find this procedure suitable for them" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p.155). As Elizabeth Grosz (1994) states, "this is not a moral attitude or judgement regarding masochism but a description of its 'microphysics,' of its subjective components in their relations among themselves and with objects or implements and even sadistic subjects or sources of torture" (p. 171). The position of Deleuze and Guattari increase the concern not for the right and wrong of the act, but of the techniques of power which are at work within the act.

Masculinity and Masochism

In an attempt to describe the 'microphysics' of the trace of masochism in desire, I want to start to investigate the relation of masculinity and masochism. The distinction between male and female experiences of masochism has been noted since Freud's description of masochism. The category "feminine masochism," one of the three categories of masochism described by Freud (1924/1959), is based on analysis of men who have fantasies in which "the subject is placed in a situation characteristic of

womanhood" (p. 258). As Silverman (1992) points out, this definition implies that masochism is already implicit in the acts of being a woman, and that only men can achieve a perverse masochism, thus any exhibition of masochism is always already implicit in a system of power structures based on male power. "As I have already remarked…masochism in all of its guises is as much a product of the existing symbolic order as a reaction against it" (Silverman, 1992, p. 213).

An example can be found in the description of Chris Sharma, a top sport climber, on his recent climb R*evelation*, which holds the title of the hardest climb in the world. His interaction with the route is described in an article where the focus is on the inability of Sharma to let the route go despite the humiliation he faced during his attempts (Lowell, 2001). In the article, Sharma is quoted about his repeated attempts on the route, "I was stuck…The whole thing became a chore: hiking up, knowing that I'd fail. Every day it was like, 'Time to get up there and take my beatings. I guess that's what I'm here for" (Lowell, 2001, p. 58). And even the completion of the route is described more like humiliation than celebration:

> Chris Sharma hangs at the end of his rope with his face buried in his hands. To those who have followed Chris' quest for the first ascent of this magnificent project, the scene is, at first glance, all too familiar. Over the past four years, he's spent 13 weeks on three separate trips falling off this route. His efforts have elevated the line to legendary status and drawn international attention. All his previous attempts – maybe as many as 100 – have ended in failure, and the image of Chris dangling from his rope in defeat has become ingrained in the consciousness of the climbing public." (Lowell, 2001, p. 55)

This time, however, as the author mentions, is different because Sharma has finished the route and is elated. The image given fits very easily into the definition of female masochism - the route takes upon a glorified position, one of international renown, while

Sharma merely hangs his head. This is strikingly similar to passages from Sacher-Masoch's (1967/1971) Venus in Furs, where the male, Severin commits himself to being the servant of his love, Wanda.

The author of Venus in Furs (Sacher-Masoch, 1967/1971) was Leopold von Sacher Masoch, the namesake of masochism. In the novel, the main character (Severin) describes, to his friends, the love of his youth, a cold woman (Wanda) with whom he enters into a contract, at the pain of humiliation. Wanda travels internationally while Severin remains her servant until the time she leaves him. Throughout the novel, the focus of the pain that Severin experiences is on the humiliation that he receives for being in love with his master, a woman who seems to care not for him. She leaves him at the end of the story to run off with another man, and Severin is left to go back to his home to realize that his humiliation was not going to win her love (as he was led to believe).

As Silverman (1992) has stated though, these positions of feminine masochism need to be considered in the light of the existing symbolic order. While Sharma and Severin may submit as the passive actor, they do end up with benefits. Severin, after Wanda leaves, is cured of his desire to be humiliated by a woman, and instead turns to become the hammer and not the nail – that is, now he has a woman that worships him, "because I train her with a knout" (Sacher-Masoch, 1967/1971, p. 125). Sharma for his part is now a figure of international renown because of the route he has finished (Figure 6). The experience of humiliation and pain that both Severin and Sharma pass through are part of the road to success; they are conditions through which they mobilize their future. Their success would be impossible for women to achieve through these narratives because of the implication that femininity is a masochism naturally.

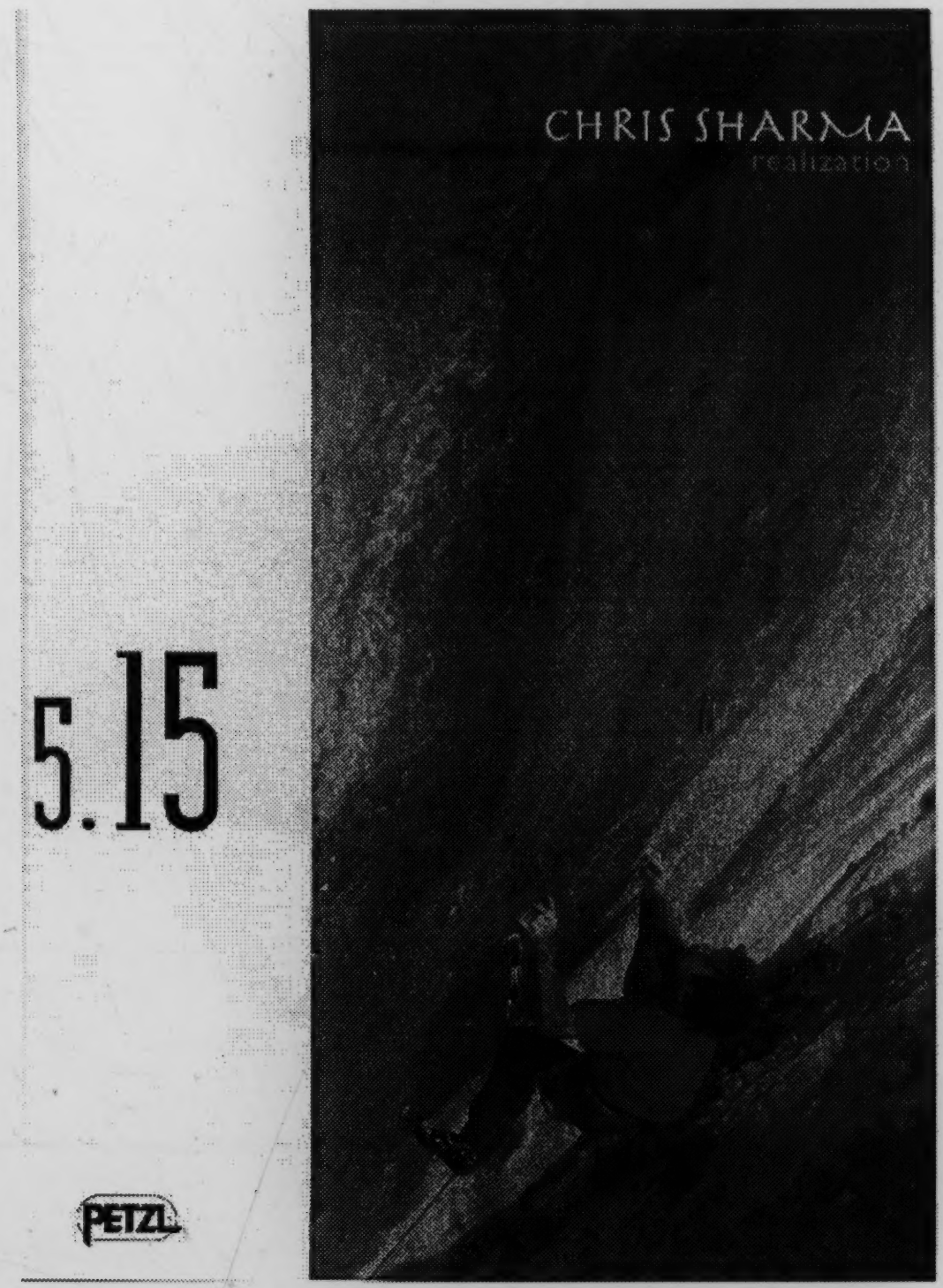

Figure 6 - Petxl, (2001) Rock and Ice, 111, 19.

Silverman (1992) also gives us an effective tool for discussing the connection between masculinity and masochism through her explanation of reflexive masochism. Through her analysis of T.E. Lawrence, she describes how the category of reflexive masochism can allows for both a passive and active part in the pain/pleasure combination. Reflexive masochism, introduced by Freud (1917/1959) in the essay "Instincts and their Vicissitudes," describes a situation, contrary to other forms of masochism that he has described, in which a subject both is an active and passive participant in the masochism. The subject takes pleasure in giving pain to others, and is at the same time the object upon which that pain is conferred. "Because reflexive masochism does not demand the renunciation of activity, it is ideally suited for negotiating the contradictions inherent in masculinity. The male subject can indulge his appetite for pain without at the same time calling into question either his virility, or his paternal lineage" (Silverman, 1992, p. 326). The combination of passive and active allows for the masochist act to happen without the contributions of an 'other.' In this sense reflexive masochism acts as a binary of feminine masochism, which relies on being a passive subject that is humiliated by a specified 'other' (the route for Sharma). As we can recall, feminine masochism is only possible as a perversion in men, because in women the symptoms merely come with the ability to act like a woman. In an important way, reflexive masochism acts as a binary to feminine masochism in this instance as well – masculinity almost requires men to be reflexive masochists – it is, in Silverman's words, "compatible with – indeed, perhaps a prerequisite for – extreme virility" (p. 327).

David Savran (1998) applies this observation to the dominant white masculinity in American culture. Drawing from such figures as Robert Bly, Sylvester Stallone,

Timothy McVeigh and Forrest Gump, Savran asks how the fantasy of 'white man as victim' relies on a reflexive masochism. The projection of suffering onto themselves (real or imagined) allows men to conceive of their positions of power as being under attack. Savran draws from Richard von Krafft-Ebing's case 57 an example of the powerful ways in which masochistic fantasies allow men in positions of privilege identify with disadvantaged 'others'. Case 57 is a white heterosexual male who gets excited reading *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, specifically by the images of a black man being hitched to a wagon while being whipped by the white man. Case 57, in Savran's view, reveals "the outrageous truth that for a white male subject living in a pervasively racist and misogynist culture, a black positionality can function analogously to a feminine one insofar as both represent positions of abjection" (p. 33). The male subject identifies with the threatened subject, and subsequently feminizes it to his liking. This fantasy "allows the white male subject to take up the position of victim, to feminize and/or blacken himself fantasmatically, and to disavow the homosexual cathexes that are crucial to the process of (patriarchal) cultural reproduction, all the while asserting his unimpeachable virility" (p. 33).

Climbers high on a route of El Capitan engage in a similar fantasy. In the description of enduring a 36 hour storm on El Capitan in an article entitled, "It's Raining Pain," Pete Takeda (2001) uses a selection from his climbing partners journal: "This is going to be a long night. There is so much rattling and swinging. This is so ghetto. Pete calls it a burial at sea. This is way ghetto" (p. 53). These climbers seem to adopt the belief expressed in Figure 5 and the depiction of black men in climbing media that climbing experiences of pain and challenge need to move through a racialized other. The

invocation of 'ghetto' to describe their mechanical ledge on a cliff in Yosemite National park in California is an attempt to redefine their position to that of victim (through a racialised neighbourhood) so that their success is all the more valiant.

Reflexive masochism is a position from which a male subject, like Sylvester Stallone's characters Rambo and Rocky (and I would also stress the similarities here between these two subjectivities and Stallone's character Gabe in *Cliffhanger*), shows his virility precisely by taking a beating (Savran. 1998). The fantasy that is played out under reflexive masochism "relentlessly reproduces a tough male subject by subjugating and battering his (feminized) other" (Savran, 1998, p. 190). The hero, in these fantasies is permitted "to prove his manhood, to verify his strength and courage, to prove that he has the right stuff, by kicking his other 'to shit'" (p. 190).

This destructive force that operates with the male subject, against a specified feminized 'other' is also documented by Theweleit (1977/1987) in his analysis of the autobiographies and novels written by pre-Nazi German solder males. In the long passage quoted in Chapter 2 (p. 24), Theweleit shows how the interior and exterior of the soldier male is split and a literal battle is raged between the two. Theweleit's Deleuzian framework illustrates how this inner working of the soldier male – the psychic split of the interior into a male and female, a good and bad – is not only a fantasy that takes place at a psychic level. The violence that was committed by the soldier males was a direct result of their fantasies, and Theweleit challenges us to think through desire, or in our case, masochism, as a considerable force on both the body of the soldier male and the women, communist, and racialised other that the soldier male encountered. The question that

Theweleit persuades us to ask about climbing is how are the traces of masochism constituted on the bodies of climbers and those that interact in the climbing sphere.

IV. Recoding the body

My hope is that I have shown how climbing masculinities operate within a sphere of meaning that is partially constructed by the absence of masochism – that is, climbing is not masochism, but we can only know that because of its disavowal of that statement. I want to conclude here with some final remarks on how that definition of climbing, with masochism as a trace, works through the field of social reality. This analytical move will also illustrate the ways in which style, as a normative framework, works through bodies of climbers. Style draws upon the body of the climber as a starting surface, privileging certain bodies with certain styles of climbing. I draw here upon two images that are able to connect the discourses of masochism, exploration, and risk as I have explained them

The first image returns to the 'hero' of the Kyrgyzstan expedition, Caldwell, in an advertisement for Power Bar (Figure 7). The contradictory sense of peace through pain is obvious within this ad. Aside from being involved in the North Face expedition to Kyrgyzstan, Caldwell has been involved in the first free ascents of two important routes on El Capitan and completed several hard sport climb and bouldering routes in the Boulder Colorado region (this ad specifies his accomplishment of climbing *Kryptonite* at 5.14d). He has also won many climbing competitions, notably the Boulder, Colorado "Ultimate Man" award (three years running), and his picture is often seen in the popular climbing magazines of North America. The image here helps construct a climbing discourse that relies on pain for enjoyment. It could also be classified under Lewis' (2000) resistance to modernity.

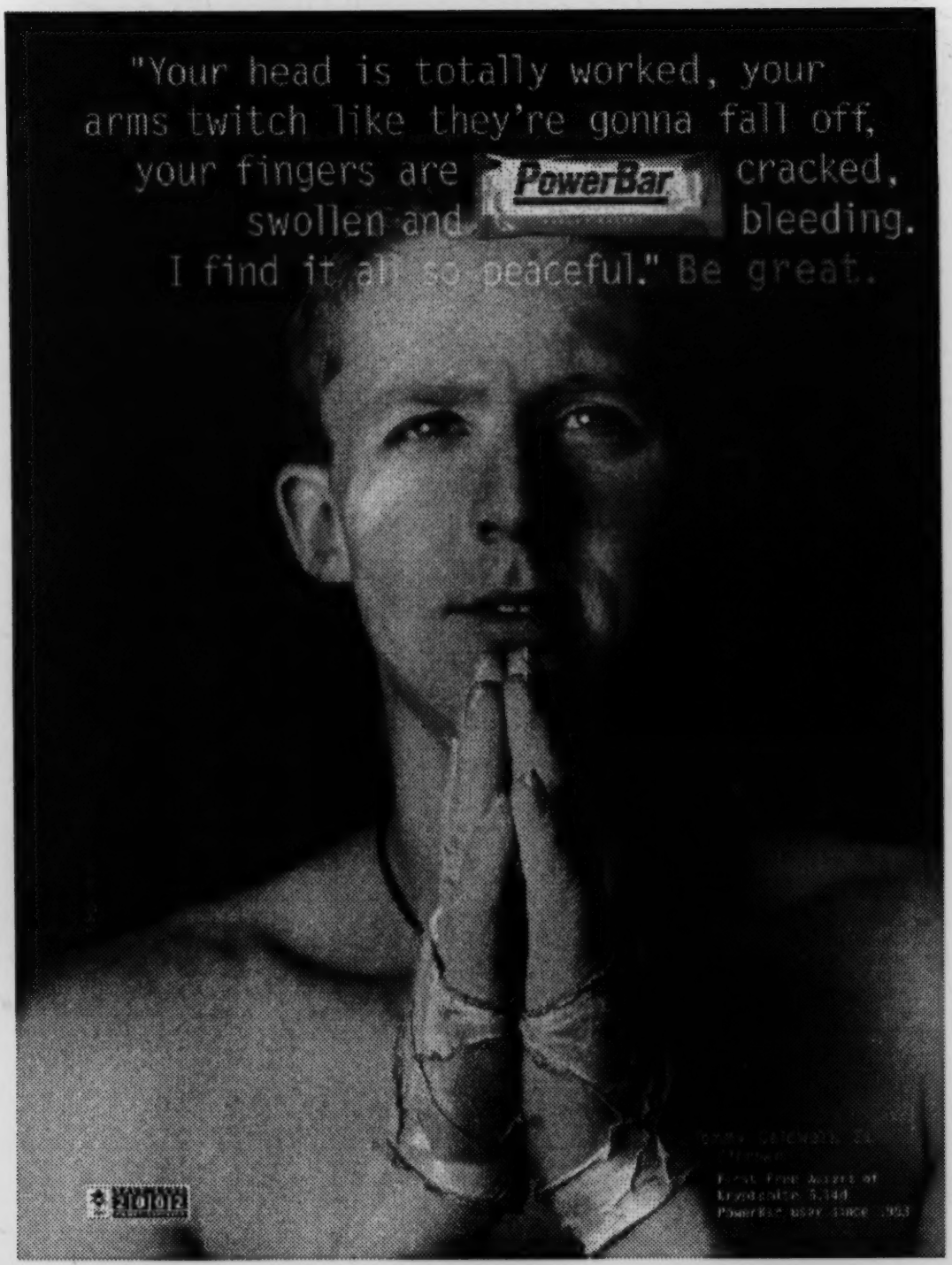

Figure 7 - Powerbar, (2001). Climbing Eyewitness, 44.

Caldwell's partner, both climbing and romantic, Rodden is the climber in the second image. Rodden has climbed extensively with Caldwell on the Kyrgyzstan expedition, as well as on hard routes on El Capitan in California. Her accomplishments are as impressive as Caldwell's, she is one of the top female climbers in the world, and she has also won several national competitions. In the second ad I want to contemplate here, Rodden is given an entirely different type of subjectivity (Figure 8). "Beth Rodden, U.S. National Climbing Team, Junior National Champion. Climbs the world's big walls but gets cold really easy. Go figure." In Caldwell's image, the text and picture promotes his style as very masculine, peace through a transcendence of the body. However, with Rodden's ad, the focus on the body (also implied to occupy the same position as the style of her climbing) is not on transcendence, it is instead on the ways her body is limiting her. This distinction relates back to the description of Rodden's body throughout the articles on the Kyrgyzstan expedition. Rodden is only allowed access to a certain style of climbing. However, the North Face slogan, highlighted on this advertisement, "Never stop exploring," reminds us that both styles are the privileged location of Western climbers. Caldwell's position of transcendence is one position of western masculinity, but it is important to remember that even though Rodden is positioned differently in relation to masculinity, she is coded the whole time as a western climber.

That Rodden is not given the same position as Caldwell offers us insight to the effects of the traces of reflexive masochism and risk in climbing. The position of the male, which can be read as active and counter-cultural, is defined through a submission to pain. The suspense of the activity only enhances their virility, as Silverman (1992) would perhaps comment. Through the understanding of masochism given by Silverman and

Figure 8 - The North Face, (2001). Rock and Ice, 110, 27. [17]

[17] The text reads: "Beth Rodden. U.S. Nationa Climbing Team, Junior National Champion. Climbs the worlds big walls but gets cold really easy. Go figure. As a member of The North Face athlete team, Beth helps design and test the most technically advanced products in the world. Like the **Cat's Meow** and the **Women's Cat Walk**, two in a series of bags built with revolutionary new Polarguard Delta insulation. Available exclusively from The North Face, no other synthetic insulation is as thermally efficient, lightweight and durable. Nest time, sleep warm, climb well. Athlete tested equipment, footwear and apparel for men, women, and children. From The North Face. Never Stop exploring.

Savran (1998), the traces that we find in climbing should not be read as an attack on the symbolic order of modernity. Lewis's claim that climbing, by allowing for the inscription of the rock on the body, embodies the quintessential rebellion to modernity is a premature conclusion. The question that needs to be examined, as I have done here, is what legacies are called upon in our understanding of climbing? The positions that Samet, Twight, Caldwell and Sharma occupy are obviously, through the reading I have provided, implicated with the symbolic order, and are not occupied with a radical rewriting of the subjectivities that are available to male subjects, as they might wish to suggest.

Chapter 4:
Reterritorializations of the self
– Representations of style

As Michelle Helstein (2002) notes, there is a tendency to read our own bodies as unmediated aspects of ourselves. In a discussion about Nike advertisements, one of her students would accept the fact that the ads were inscribed with cultural discourses, but claimed that his naked body was not. Her student's reaction signifies how certain aspects of our lives are assumed to be outside of discourse. Her student will acknowledge the field of popular culture as mediated and inscribed, but not his own body. However, as Helstein correctly argues, our bodies cannot escape into the realm of unmediated experience. In the spirit of her argument that our everyday actions are mediated by our cultural understandings, I offer this chapter.

In this chapter I approach climbing representations on the Campus Outdoor Centre (COC) climbing wall to illustrate how our leisure habits themselves inhabit a space of both decoding and coding. Using the frameworks of style and masculinity developed earlier, I sort through the representations of climbers that I see on a weekly basis. I explore the reterritorialization of climbing through style and a process of normalization building upon Foucault's (1991) concept of governmentality.

This research, however, is a larger project than the space here allows. I want to use this chapter as a conclusion to show briefly how the framework developed through the first three chapters can be fruitful if used to analyse the representations that happen at a more local level than the texts addressed in Chapter 3. As such, the observations I make about the representations on the wall are not as rigorous or complete as they could be; however, I do hope to show some sound readings of the texts presented at the wall.

because we need to take these sites of leisure and recreation as sites of the construction of discourse. Far from being consumers of popular culture, the COC climbers are engaged in the construction of popular culture and the discourse surrounding the wall. It is necessary for us to examine the interaction between the construction of cultural discourses at the level of mass culture (as I have done in Chapter 3) and the construction of cultural discourses at the local level for us to make statements on the effects of these discourses. For as Dorothy Smith (1990) states, "discourse…can be investigated as actual social relations ongoingly organized in and by the activities of actual people" (p. 160). The advantage is that we can then understand these discourses not as concrete prisons in which we live our lives, but as constructed through our actions – individuals are part of the construction and thus have the potential to provide resistance (Smith, 1990). The theoretical framework that I have created in relation to rock climbing, masculinity, and the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization is one which can provide a starting point to a detailed analysis of the creation of style, masculinity, and whiteness on the climbing wall. To this end, I offer this somewhat lengthy conclusion as a starting point.

I.Styles of Self

Perhaps a brief comment on methodology is necessary here. This project, as I highlighted in the introduction, is situated in the field of cultural studies. The focus on representations of climbing as opposed to the experience of climbing needs to be kept in mind throughout my explanation of the methodology and the description of climbing styles. This distinction allows for some freedom on my part, but it also illustrates the construction of discourse through personal actions. As Helstein's (2002) argument

suggests, our everyday actions are productive of discourses of which we are not always aware. The observations that I have made of climbing representations on the COC wall point to the constructing of discourse on the wall.

The break between an investigation of representations and one of experiences is suggestive of the break between a post-positivist and post-structuralist point of view. The post-structuralism that I draw from puts doubt into the authority of the author of an act to provide the interpretations that will work within the social field; as Ann Game (1991) asserts, "the subject, in this view, is not the source of meaning, power or action" (p. 40). Thus I do not take the statements made by a climbers style to be indicative of the personality or intention of the climber, but of the discourse which enable those acts to happen. Style is a product of discourse and a representation with specific effects within the climbing community. This applies not only to the representations of climbing that are presented as such (stories, images, advertisements), but also to representations of bodies which are often assumed to be transparent in their meaning. The key to my reading of style on the bodies of climbers is held within the belief, which was strongly denied by Helstein's (2002) student, that our bodies are in fact representations that are indeed mediated through discourse.

One such discourse is that of masculinity, which is where my observations have focused; in what ways have the coding of masculinity influenced these texts on the climbing wall? The movement of climbers on the wall, as texts in themselves, "function as cultural…transactions, as enunciatory acts through which a speaker or writer addresses a real or imagined audience, performs specific tasks, and takes up an implied (and often contradictory) gendered and racialized identity" (Savran, 1998, p. 6). The illocutionary

force of climbing style is embedded in discourses of masculinity and femininity. These discourses are always situational and related to the subject-positions that are possible at the time. Thus the reading of masculinity related to risk and masochism that was provided in the previous chapter is not at the foreground within the styles of climbing at the wall. These different descriptions of masculinity need to be considered as sites which work through forms of masculinity. It is the concern for the power relations that occur through the coding of desire through masculinity that is relevant to the future of leisure studies and critiques of masculinity.

The styles of climbing I am about to describe come mainly from my observations at the COC climbing wall during the winter and spring of 2002. As a strange academic with a notepad, I would retreat to the climbing area and record my observations about the climbers who were on the wall. However, as a climber who had been climbing at the COC for over a year, along with other experiences of climbing, the descriptions below are also drawing on experiences and people whom I had encountered before I started to officially observe. My approach to the observations was like that of a close reading of a text, where it just so happens that my text is the movement of climbers. As a climber I was familiar with the movement of the wall, and as an academic I have brought on board the reading of style that I discussed at the start of Chapter 3. The options available to the climbers were my text, and although the options were limited in different ways than a written text is limited,[22] the illocutionary force is still there. The limitation of my body does indeed make me move in certain ways, however, these movements are also

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[22] I am thinking here of the choice an author makes to write in a certain genre, or to a certain audience. Also more directly limiting could be documents written for an intended purpose such as a letter to a member of government or a doctor's report on a patient. All these are, similar to climbing movements, limited and empowered in certain influential ways which do not leave out the possibility of analysis.

influenced by how I perform masculinity. Furthermore, the representations of the movements, the text available to me as a reader, is directly influenced by masculinity. To provide an accurate and plausible reading I have been careful to pay attention to the text and to constantly recheck my reading with what happens on the wall.

The styles I am about to outline need to be considered, as perhaps all observations should be, as a compilation of my own strategic categories, ones which are a direct outcome of the theories presented in earlier chapters. I feel reassured in the use of this loose methodology for two reasons. First, it is the process of analysis that I am interested in – the ability to think through the deterritorialization of desires and the recoding of desire through forms of production. As such, my second reason is that the methodology should not flow from some sense of an objective truth, but something more connected than that. I am thinking here of Theweleit's (1977/1987) statement that "the right-or-wrong distinction is less germane than questions of how the various hypotheses operate, what results they give, and how well they can be worked with" (p. 256). The ability to which my observations and strategic categorisation works depends not only on the accuracy of the observations, but also the political sensitivity with which the analysis was developed. If there is one methodological lesson I have gained from this project, it is that the observation is only as good as the stage that set it up.

Noisy climbers.

I remember once passing through a climbing area outside of Canmore, Alberta, and listening to the discussion of the climbers on one particular route. Their discussion focused on what types of noises they liked to make while on a climb. Some preferred a short loud exhale held in between the lips, so it sounded like they had just let out all the

air from a balloon held in their mouth. Others preferred a loud scream, sometimes mixed with obscenities, while another choice of the group was to grunt quietly but almost continuously throughout the difficult parts of the climb. At first I thought this a rather humorous oddity of some climbers. However, at the wall there was a category of climbers that is best described as noisy.

I use the title 'noisy' to encapsulate a style of climbing which I read as being a pronouncement of the effort involved in their climbing activities. The title of 'noisy' refers not only to their vocal chords, but also to the movement of their body. The movements which are favoured through the noisy style of climbing all project an image of a determined and strong physical effort. In the same way that a noise which sounds like one is letting all the air out of one's lungs announces a hard and determined effort, the movements used by noisy climbers announce their struggle on the wall. Increased use of the biceps, reducing the amount of leg work that is done, making a move that is called a dynamic move, or dyno, where all points of contact with the wall are released in a jump upwards towards a hold that is just out of one's grasp; these are all types of movements favoured by the noisy style of climbing. Noisy climbers will often be on the wall with their feet not touching, making it look as though they are more concerned with their arm movement than their feet placement. When bouldering they will often jump down from a high point on the wall if they are finished a route. The movement of the climber is done quickly, with very little hesitation. Along with these movements the climber is often audibly loud as well. Along with loud breathing and shouts and yells from some noisy climbers, the noise is made by several different parts of the body; feet banging against the wall, large gasps for breath, noise from falling down when they don't

make a dyno (which is often a large dramatic fall), and noise created in celebration when they make a move or complete a route.

The noisy climber, in a sense, takes up space through the noise created from their body. The space they take up is a physical space, not simply limited to the airwaves, because it effects the other climbers in the area. The noisy climber is watched because they are the most noticeable climber on the wall at the time, while at the same time some climbers will back away from a noisy climber, perhaps from intimidation or disrespect. Noisy climbers, in the way they take up space and their performance of strength, are coded through popular definitions of masculinity. The social signifiers mobilized are inscribed by codes of loud masculinity. The codes can be seen through a class for women on how to be male, documented by Halberstam (1998). In the class the students learn the "manly arts of taking up space, dominating conversations, nose picking, and penis wearing." (Halberstam, 1998, p. 251). These codes are techniques of masculinity which are associated through the performance of clichéd norms of masculinity.

I point to Halberstam to help understand the significance of this style because I believe her analysis would be a fruitful direction to take with the dilemma caused by reading this style through the frame of reflexive masochism as outlined earlier. The performance of noisy climbers comes close to the trace of reflexive masochism which is embodied by Caldwell's position of transcendence through pain. It is through the expression of their pain, of their effort and anguish, that noisy climbers are able to express their ability as climbers – the further they fell, in a sense, means the higher they climbed. But we need to remember that Savran (1998) and Silverman (1992), following Freud (1917/1959) drew specifically on men and masculinity for their analysis of

reflexive masochism, and their conclusions are specific (in both Savran and Silverman's case) to white men; the use of reflexive masochism allows them to prove themselves in ways not possible without the use of such a performance. But my style category, as I have observed it, is comprised of both women and men climbers, although predominantly men. The understanding of what this use of reflexive masochism (or perhaps a reformulation of the trace of masochism might be called for) by women climbers means needs to be reanalyzed through a different theoretical framework, one which I believe would benefit from a discussion with Halberstam's understanding of female masculinity. Halberstam's argument would allow the analysis of the performance of masculinity to become detached from the male body, creating a space for an understanding of female masochism as not a natural category for women (as Freud implied), but as a product of a certain set of attachments (say, for example, to whiteness).

Deliberate climbers.

Another style of climbing, one whose movement is vastly different, although sometimes able to occupy just as much space as the noisy style of climber, is the deliberate climber. The deliberate climber is one in which it would seem that they evaluate the moves of their climb with precision before they are done, either before the climb has started, or during the climb. A deliberate climber occupies space through silence; their moves are quiet and calculated, and they are often perceived as very good because the movements are done with accuracy that is admired by others. Deliberate climbers approach their routes with slow movement, often taking time to place out each move before they climb a certain route. On the wall they take time to shake their arms out (a technique of resting when they are in comfortable position on the wall and they can

let go with one hand to rest it for awhile), and to place their feet and hands correctly on each hold before weighting it, ensuring that they have the best possible grip before continuing. Their feet are often moving between hand movements, sometimes more than once. They manoeuvre their body into the position they want on the wall slowly, turning their hips from side to side between hand movements. The deliberate climber will take time on the wall to rest if they get a good opportunity. The quiet movement achieved through this style gives the sense that they are wasting the least amount of energy on every climb, enabling a longer climbing time with more endurance for longer routes. This style is often commented on by observers, many whom will notice that this style of climbing offers a very aesthetic movement, one which also makes the climb look easier than when other climbers do it. By 'making the climb look easier' the deliberate style naturalizes the movement of climbing on to the body, while it remains a performance.

The silence created by the deliberate climbing style draws people into the climbing. I was observing the wall when a deliberate climber started to climb, and within moments other climbers on the wall had stepped off and were watching the deliberate climber on the wall. Throughout the time that the climber was on the wall, there were continuous comments about how the climbs were made to look much easier than they actually were because of the movements of this climber. The climber, a 15 year old girl, was compared by an observing climber, to a dancer on the wall. This comment points to the gendered coding within this style. While noisy climbers are almost uniformly coded as masculine, deliberate climbing has feminine and masculine codings. When men climb with a deliberate style, the focus is often on the precision and accuracy of the moves. Their bodies are often used to help code their movements into masculine categories. One

climber, before approaching a route of considerable difficulty, removed his shirt and sat contemplating the moves for two minutes before attempting and completing the route. The removal of the shirt revealed a muscular upper body and made the representation move away from any coding of dancing towards the more masculine codes of control and precision embodied in the soldier males of Theweleit's study (1977/1987).

This dual coding of the style points to an interesting connection between climbing style and the construction of masculinity and femininity. Traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, as Butler (1991) argues, create the identity that they are trying to embody. Thus (gendered) actions are naturalized on gendered bodies. What we see in the gendered coding of this style is the performance working to naturalize the bodies of climbers. The deliberate style, as a performance, seeks to eliminate all traces of performance and naturalize the climbing movement and climbing body into two (opposite) genders.

Eager climbers.

The final style of climbing I will describe is distinct from the previous two in the ability, at certain times, to act almost as a parody of itself. An eager climber seems to abandon all attempts to do things correctly (as prescribed by instruction manuals), and takes the mantra of 'do what works.' This style is not only found in those climbers who have not yet mastered climbing techniques, but is a style which is found on both experienced and novice climbers. Eager climbers will often peel off the wall on a moment's notice, as if they are always balancing on a fragile line of being in control and out of control. Once off the wall they waste little time between climbs, often jumping back on to the wall within seconds of falling. Their legs and arms will often move fast,

and then they manage to stick the to the wall like glue when they do get to their intended position. Although they can be loud, the noise is often laughter, or a strange mix of relief and sadness. Their movement, taken as a whole, can be seen to embody a sense of lightness about the whole episode, as if they are not sure if their efforts are being useful or not.

The eager climber can act, balancing out the two previous styles, in the function of parody. The movement, when seen to embody the sense of lightness or meaninglessness, contrasts and calls into play the relatively determined and serious styles of climbing. Interestingly, this parody acts towards itself, in that the intensity which many eager climbers show on the wall is itself ridiculed by the meaninglessness presented in their movement.

I. The Normalization of Style

There are, inevitably, other styles of climbing, and climbers will often be able to move between the strategic categories which I have outlined here. Along with the ability to read popular culture and discourse at a local level my interest, in describing these styles, is in the way in which we can read the privileging and normalizing tendencies within climbing, and specifically at the COC climbing wall to show how desire can work through style and masculinity. I want to isolate here how the structure of the climbing wall, and the culture which surrounds it, emphasises the climbing ability of climbers – that is, how hard can they climb. It is through the process of governmentality (Foucault, 1991) that the privileging of performance is best described. This focus on performance fits within the production of a normalized style of climbing, and subsequently, as I will show, limits the forms in which desire can take place on the climbing wall.

To understand why I turn to governmentality as a explanation for the privileging of behaviour on the climbing it is best to explain what Foucault (1991) meant by the term itself. In his lecture, "Governmentality" Foucault considers how the process of ruling has switched from one focused on sovereignty (how the prince should rule others to stay in power) as demonstrated in Niccolo Machiavelli's The Prince, to one focused on governmentality, a way of ruling population to achieve certain ends. The key difference is that a focus on population is a focus on the relations between populations, between individuals and others, between individuals and things (production, reproduction, wealth, agriculture etc.). Government, as opposed to sovereign rule, is focused on a plurality of ends, not merely the reproduction of the sovereign, and as such it uses a plurality of tactics. It is thus that, "the finality of government resides in the things it manages and in the pursuits of the perfection and intensification of the process which it directs; and the instruments of government, instead of being laws, now come to be a range of multiform tactics" (Foucault, 1991, p. 95).

As Toby Miller (1998) points out, this focus on multiform tactics to manage population is critical for cultural studies, because we are looking at governmentality as "a complex movement between self and society" (p. 15). Power is no longer invested in the figure of the sovereign, but it is instead dispersed through the population and the relations within the population. As Miller states,

> the center invests people with the capacity to produce and consume things, insisting on freedom in some compartments of life and obedience in others.... Governmentality is destined for a place *beyond* sovereignty, in the social field. It will be other directed and instrumental; its target, the whole population. (p. 16)

From here Miller suggests that our understandings of cultural processes, such as the creation and policing of genre in television, can be read as modes of governmentality. As a place beyond the sovereign, techniques like genre in television, or for our purposes, style in climbing, can be understood as a category of governmentality. As Miller explains, "genres provide a vehicle for establishing community standards of aesthetic taste and pedagogical direction" (p. 22). It is here that genre acts as a control over the topic and programme as well as the viewers. Outside of the text, genre acts as a bureaucratic tool to structure the pleasure of television watching, ensuring easy recognition and thus a marketability, turning text into commodity easily.

The commodification of climbing styles in the media has created recognition of elite climbers. On the COC climbing wall the productive constraints which privilege the ability to perform, which, as I suggested in the above descriptions, is most easily recognizable in the deliberate climbing style. We can see the privileging of this style in the attention given to climbers on the wall as well as by the predominance of this style of climbing that I observed on the instructors employed by the COC.

There are three main factors, which I categorize as productive constraints that create a focus on performance within the climbing wall. First, by having the wall positioned in the corner of the Universiade Pavilion, a facility for various indoor track and field events, the wall is open for observation by not only the climbers, but also by non-climbing participants at the wall. More importantly, the design of the wall and the fence which surrounds it also encourages the climbers to constantly watch each other. The space occupied by the climbing wall is triangular, with two walls of the triangle being climbing walls and the other wall has benches, small shelves for shoes and

clothing, and the stretching area.[23] This encourages the constant surveillance of climbers by other climbers; there is very little space to rest that is not directly facing a wall.

Second, the COC wall has a large space for bouldering, which is considered to be a performance aspect of climbing. Bouldering is climbing at a low level without any ropes or safety system and is often considered, although not exclusively, to be a method of training for climbing. Consider Long's (1993) comments on bouldering: "bouldering is such an engaging and stimulating endeavour that many climbers prefer it to roped climbing. Unquestionably, bouldering is the quickest way to gain climbing skill. A dedicated boulderer brings a lot of artillery to a roped climb" (p. 168). Here we see bouldering as a skilled form of climbing, often assumed to be used as a training tool (Long's section on bouldering comes in the 'Training' section). The large amount of space dedicated to bouldering at the COC wall (and the heavy use of those walls)[24] produces a higher level of climbing because of the connotations around bouldering.

The third factor, which works together with the space allocated to bouldering, is the use of taped routes to make the climbing harder. Along the walls, especially the bouldering walls, there are more artificial climbing holds than most climbers need. The extra holds allow for a variety of moves to be done on the same space, keeping people from getting bored, as well as allowing for different levels of climbers to climb on the same space. To increase the difficulty of these spaces the COC sets up taped routes. To climb at a more difficult level, one only has to follow the holds which are next to a certain colour of tape. The use of taped routes is dominant on the wall, with most

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[23] The fence formed a triangle with the two sides of the climbing wall during my observation period, however, the fenced was extended and now adds two sides and forms a rectangular shape.

climbers attempting at least one or more of the routes while they climb at the wall. The majority of the routes approach a grade of 5.10+, with an occasional one or two being below 5.9. This means that they are to be climbed by experienced climbers of moderate to high skill (for amateur climbers). The use of the taped routes, which are given a focus on the wall and in the use of the wall, is a way to enable the use of the wall to increase or maintain a high level of performance by the climbers.

These three factors act as productive constraints; in the same way that rules and boundaries in sports produce certain types of behaviours, these factors privilege a style of climbing which focuses on the performance of the climb. While discussing how it is possible, from a Foucaultian perspective, to see constraints on action as having productive effects, Shogan (1999) states,

> that constraints have productive or enabling effects resonates with me because of my understanding of the ways in which game rules constrain athletes' actions. Game rules enable certain actions and limit other actions by placing constraints on what athletes are allowed to do. Some of the constraints prohibit certain actions while others prescribe actions. Together these constraints on athletes' actions, produce what counts as skills in a sport. (p. 4)

Because of these productive forms of power, we must understand the climbers' body as a disciplined body, one that understands the constraints on their actions and works from within those constraints. The ability for climbers to exercise a style of climbing within the constraints on their actions (the need to be able to climb at a certain level being one them) requires that climbers have a disciplined body.

My argument is that through the productive effects of the three aspects of the COC wall described above climbing a certain climbing style is privileged to become the

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[24] It was unusual for me to observe any climber who did not use the bouldering walls for at least one route. The trend was in fact the opposite. The majority of climbers I observed stayed focused on the bouldering,

proper climbing style. As such, the normalization of that style is in fact a normalization of the self. Significantly, that normalization has enormous productive effects on the way desire can be expressed in the space of the climbing wall giving evidence to the argument that the discourse of 'a sense of self' is not achieved through the act of climbing, but retroactively placed on the event. In the section that follows I will discuss the productive effects which I see happening because of the privileging of style, starting with a discussion of how whiteness is produced through the normalization of style

The Limited Self.

In the past ten years there has been an increase in the study of how whiteness as a category influences our understandings of social identity. Typically these studies will start with a acknowledgement of the invisibility of white as a defining category of whiteness. For example, Thomas Nakayama and Robert Krizek (1999) state that their project to expose the rhetoric of whiteness is to "displace its centrality and reveal its invisible position" (p. 89-90). Or as George Lipsitz (1998) suggests, "Whiteness is everywhere in U.S. culture, but it is very hard to see" (p.1). By identifying whiteness as an invisible category they are naming it as a determining factor in the ways we understand virtually all categories of life, from racist ideologies to the food that we buy at the corner store. This invisibility is parallel to some ways masculinity itself is invisible. Halberstam's (1998) understanding of white masculinity being the most naturalized masculinity points to the way both whiteness and masculinity are invisible categories of experience. As was shown in chapter 2, these categories are not independent, but rely on each other to produce identity.

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with only about half ever using the high walls.

At the centre of the invisibility of whiteness, and most specifically white maleness, there is often an assumption of a powerful force. Nakayama and Krizek (1999) use a quotation from Ferguson to explain how they conceptualise the centre of whiteness:

> The place from which power is exercised is often a hidden place. When we try to pin it down, the center [sic] always seems to be somewhere else. Yet we know that phantom center, elusive as it is, exerts a real, undeniable power over the entire framework of our culture, and over the ways we think about it. (p. 88)

It is the idea of the phantom centre that interests me, as it suggests a productive force of the unconscious in a way similar to Deleuze and Guattari's (1972/1977) notion of desiring-production. Desiring-production acts within the unconscious to produce a reality in the framework of desire; the phantom centre, as a production through desire, structures reality through a collective coding of behaviour and produces a reality that has arisen through the same processes as desiring-production. The belief in and desire for the phantom centre by a white population, although is does not exist, produces myths centred around the power of that phantom, myths which get taken at face value in many discourses that surround whiteness and identity.

Abdel-Shehid (2000) points to the way this phantom centre is more than merely a hidden place, but is an 'absent presence.' His comments point to how the core of Canadian hockey identity relies on a notion of whiteness, of hockey as a white sport, a core structured through this 'absent presence.' Abdel-Shehid (2000) documents narratives of the crisis of hockey and outlines how the logic of this crisis implicitly assumes that hockey was a white sport and that non-white hockey players are a new creation, and fundamentally part of the crisis of hockey. He then proceeds to expose the myth of hockey as a white sport by a reading of the continual and historical presence of

Black and First Nations hockey players. The narratives of hockey as a white sport assumes a presence of only white players, and these discourses create the existence of an absent presence. Whiteness, as the elusive and evolving category that is discussed in critical studies of whiteness, is itself structured as something which is both existent, and non-existent. The creation of this phantom centre, through the invisibility of such an important category, enables the reterritorialization through the category of white masculinity.

This process of reterritorialization, one which Abdel-Shehid (2000) points to in the narratives of the death of hockey, makes it vital to read climbing style through the category of white masculinity. The normalization of style to a privileged style performance, with no connection based on race implies an invisibility – that is, a whiteness to the style. It is significant that climbing style is distinguishable based on gender (note the ability for a masculine and feminine deliberate style of climbing) but not so in terms of categories other than whiteness. It is also important to note that climbers were not all white; there are several non-white climbers who were observed to create these categories. The importance of these two points combined together help us see that the normalization of style is a territorialization through race that is structured based upon an 'absent presence' that Abdel-Shehid (2000) describes.

Let me expand here. I remarked during the description that there was a different coding of style for feminine deliberate climbers, as opposed to masculine deliberate climbers. The fact that this difference exists in the popular discourse shows a potential space for the existence of feminine climbing. This existence, however, is somewhat limited and there are three things which structure this possibility. First, feminine

climbing, according to dominant climbing discourses, can exist, but only as a separate and non-influential form of climbing. Second, feminine climbing is defined by these same discourses as a relatively new style of climbing, often associated with sport climbing which did not really start to become popular until the late 1980's. Third, the notion of female style can only exist as a (natural) counterpart to masculine style. It must be deliberate, but feminine. From this position, feminine climbers are acknowledged only when they are attached to a masculine position creating the possibility of feminine style as existing only through a heterosexual grid. Rodden's position within the Kyrgyzstan narrative highlights the way in which she was dating Caldwell. These three factors limit the participation in climbing that is allowed under a feminine subject position. However, it is present in dominant discourses.

There is no style that has been articulated for a white or non-white subject position. The absence of this distinction, in Canada, codes the style as implicitly white and invisible. There is no position open for non-white climbers to exist, except to be masked by the category of whiteness. It is the presence of non-white climbers, however, that illustrates the invisibility of the texts of whiteness in climbing style. Because of the existence of Black, Asian and First Nation climbers (among others) climbers, because of their influence on climbing styles, and because this existence and influence is unrecognized, the territorialization of style as white is necessarily an 'absent presence' – that is, the belief in rock climbing as a 'white sport' exists, but it is an unfounded myth, which normalizes the presence of non-white climbers in the gaze of white climbing culture.

With the normalization of style then, we have a limiting of the subject-positions that occur in climbing. Feminine climbing exists beside, and under, masculine climbing, and both are coded as white. The limited positions which are allowed to occupy the space at the wall shows the ways in which desire is also limited to flow at the climbing wall. Through the normalization of style, we have a denial of any non-normalized, that is, non-white, heterosexual, flows of desire.

II. Deterritorializations of desire

It is vital for us to remember, however, that this normalization is structured through the absence of the myth it is based upon, such that whenever these territorializations happen, they are necessarily against a deterritorialization that could displace and decode the flows of desire that help to produce our understandings of experience. To allow us to glimpse the potential of a climbing style outside of the normalizing influences of white heterosexual masculinity, we should be looking for the fractures of the discourses that happen on the wall and in the discourses of climbing. For as Foucault (1980) reminds us, there is no power, no discourse, without resistance. I want to no move to two examples of the resistance that is often hidden within climbing texts and representations, and from here I will give some brief conclusions that will help future research in climbing.

I want to offer the set of observations that follow as a starting point to a project that sketches some lines of resistance to the coding of climbing. It is my hope that the resistance provided in the examples (and the complicity which is necessarily joined to that resistance) can be illustrated here, and that the lesson given at the end will provide some help for future studies in leisure and masculinity. At the root of this hope is the

belief that, "a study of representation becomes, not a study of mimetic mirroring or subjective projection, but an exploration of the way in which narratives and images structure how we see ourselves and how we construct our notions of self, in the present and the future" (Hutcheon, 1989, p. 7). The use of style in the context of rock climbing has shown the ways representations of white masculinity have influenced and limited our notions of rock climbing identities. As a reading of rock climbing identities, I hope this text can be used as a tentative understanding of both a historical moment *and* a form of analysis that can be continued to a future (or past) moment.

Yoshi's Nightmare.

I move now back to the COC and a climber who gives us a version of climbing resistance. Yoshi was a frequent climber at the COC wall for several months over the past year, and I often saw him interacting with other climbers, and he climbed with many different partners. Often while he was at the wall bouldering by himself, he would climb with people that he had not come to the wall with. His style was very quick and fast, fitting within the eager climbing style described earlier. He was often very light-hearted about climbing, laughing at his inabilities, and making jokes about the ways he and others climbed.

Yoshi's Nightmare was a route set up on a bouldering wall. It was long and hard, rated at about 5.11, and it remained on the wall for two or three months. Yoshi himself climbed on the route often, although I am not sure who set the route, whether it was by him or another climber. I draw attention to this climb, because it brings inevitable attention to Yoshi's presence on the climbing wall. His 'nightmare' signifies the influence that he had on the climbing wall. The 'nightmare' was itself a parody in some

ways, as his climbing movements embodied a style which suggested that a nightmare was the furthest thing climbing could represent. I read the title of the climb as a signification of both the presence of Yoshi (an Asian-Canadian climber at the COC wall, where predominantly white climbers are found), and his critique of the seriousness of the climbing community. Often there are climbs labelled with names resembling the titles of horror shows, which may or may not be taken as a joke, that recall the trace of masochism. *Yoshi's Nightmare* is different than these other climbs because of the prominent connection between climber and route. The presence of the climber within the title acts to counter the whiteness that is assumed to exist within the climbing community. As an extension of the masochistic traces of climbing, the combination of the title with Yoshi's style of climbing helps to highlight the performance of masculinity through climbing. The parody embodied by his style extends to parody the trace of masochism revealing the construction of that trace and points to the construction of whiteness at the same time.

Coal-Blackened fingernails.

In a preface to a history of women climbers, Bill Birkett (Birkett & Peascod, 1989) writes about the afternoon when he and his writing partner first realized the hidden history of women climbers. His partner, Bill Peascod, was talking about the earlier days of climbing, when he was one of the few working class climbers in the British climbing scene. Peascod states, "if you were working-class, at that time you were looked down upon or felt to be subservient to the establishment. Although I longed to be part of the climbing fraternity, I was ashamed to be a coal miner; when I mixed with other climbers I used to hide the fact, attempt to put on a cultured accent and keep my coal-blackened

fingernails out of sight" (Birkett & Peascod, 1989, p. 11). This comment is then compared to the authors opinion at the time on a women who was climbing some hard climbs – their amazement that a "woman, a mere girl, so obviously feminine, [could] climb that hard" (Birkett & Peascod, 1989, p. 11). The realization they came to was that their amazement over the ability of women was the same type of prejudice held against themselves as working class climbers.

Birkett and Peascod's (1989) comments from this preface points to the double project of illuminating the hidden history of climbing, and the project of coding that hides the multiple positions that are available to climbers. Although unknown to the authors, their comments insightfully point to how this coding of climbing is done through the body. The blackened fingernails were hidden and coded as normal and the text that they offered to the climbing community was erased by the working of class and masculinity. In the same way that they denied the possibility of a woman climbing hard routes, early working class climbers movements were assumed to have a limit of difficulty, one which could only be passed by climbers of a certain climbing fraternity.

III. The future work in climbing

These two stories help to illustrate the main points of what I have presented here. Through my comments on the coding and decoding of climbing styles I think we can gain three valuable conclusions. First, climbing texts are representations, and they need to be read through the lens of discourse to illuminate the working of such discourses to structure our understanding of experiences. This applies to both the texts, images, and advertisements that we see in magazines along with the representations that we read from the bodies and words of climbers that we climb with at the climbing wall and local cliffs.

It is possible to read both the style of Yoshi's movement and the descriptions of working-class bodies as a text of masculinity. The discourse of culture is not limited to the production of lasting texts but is also constantly being constructed through our everyday actions. This observation opens up a diverse range of questions that can be asked to the level of the experience of climbing. My work could be taken further, as I suggested at the outset of this chapter, to provide more detail to the work of masculinity on the climbing wall. Part of this expanded research project would look at the way that normative white masculinity structures climbing experiences. The inclusion of the experience of climbing, as opposed to representation, would give a more detailed understanding of the way masculinity works through climbing to help produce our social reality.

Second, it must be stressed that the discourse we perform in our climbing is structured through the process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The combination of resistance and power needs to be explored further in the realm of climbing to provide a clearer picture of how it is that climbing can (and cannot) provide an alternative to modern experiences of life. My research has shown that many of the discourses that offer such alternatives are also involved in the recoding of climbing through certain normalizing tendencies (masculinity, whiteness). Deleuze and Guattari's outline of deterritorialization and reterritorialization becomes important to the study of rock climbing (and leisure studies in general) because it refuses to see leisure as an 'innocent' activity – there are constant processes through which leisure helps to construct our everyday social relations of power. My analysis is not to isolate and untangle the confluations of power and leisure, but rather, to point to the fact that power and leisure

are inseparable, and we need to provide an adequate theoretical model of that inseparability. The understanding that discourses of climbing are involved in both the deterritorialization and the simultaneous reterritorialization of desire needs to be understood through Foucault's statement that "it is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad" (Quoted in Halperin, 1995, p. 114). Both of the examples I have used here are chosen not as ultimate deterritorializations to free us from codings of desire, but as strategies that acknowledge those codings and work to understand their impact of social relations. As such they are strategies that need to be constantly evaluated. And this leads us to my third observation.

The process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization needs to be explored further to provide us with alternatives to the present situation. To continue Foucault's statement, "If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do....I think that the ethico-poltical choice we have to make everyday is to determine which is the main danger" (quoted in Halperin, 1995, p. 114-5). The research into climbing styles, and possibly in leisure more generally, needs to focus on the dual process of the coding and recoding to illuminate the most fruitful strategy to provide for an alternative to the normalizing tendencies of climbing style, and leisure behaviours. If we understand correctly that our leisure habits, our climbing activities, are implicated in a field of discourse which is structured through a reterritorialization of desire towards the normalization of that desire, a restriction of the possible subject positions offered in climbing, then we need to work towards a strategy to counter that coding process.

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